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Many good things have happened in the past.

In 1809 Edgar Allan Poe was born.
In 1816 Mary Shelley wrote FRANKENSTEIN.
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In 1890 H. P. Lovecraft was born.
In 1897 Bram Stoker gave DRACULA to the world.

Then there was the time of the 20th Century man, and the era of thrillfilms! Jesús Franco created the modern "Sexy Shocker" in 1961! Jean Rollin's imaginative genius brought sexy vampires to the bloody screen! The naughty nudies flooded the grindhouse circuit! It was a wonderful time to be alive!

Sadly, that era is past, dead to a world only occupied with the present.

Now is the time! Tired of being ordinary? Then read the unusual! Welcome guys and ghouls, to **MONSTER! INTERNATIONAL/HIGHBALL MAGAZINE** – the only monster magazine for men! This is a present from the past, and other magazines pale (as a ghost) in comparison! We at Kronos have gathered tomb-gether the beast articles, photos, and artwork for YOU to enjoy!

Read on.

Timothy C. Paxton
EDITOR

PS (post-crypt): Any ghoul in their right mind (or possessing a brain, not necessarily their own) should check out the very cool French fanzine dedicated to the man who invented Euro-Erotica: Jess Franco. Contact Alain PETIT, 34, Rue Des Trois Faucons, 84000 Avignon, France. It'll curl your short hairs!



SURF'S UP! Or at least something is, when brazen beach babe Barbara wants some fun-in-the-sun with her mad monster mate Mongo!

MONSTER!

INTERNATIONAL

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MELVIN D. CHIMPP

*MII's numero uno reader and big ape on campus says,
"I dig the mag as much as I do chicks."*

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THE NEW MONSTER

Interview by Marcel Burel

These are difficult times for monster movies—they just aren't as popular as they once were. Of the new films that are being made and distributed worldwide, the majority never seem to reach theaters; it's straight to video for this less-than-desired, and oft critically dismissed genre. It's especially hard in France, where since 1967 Jean Rollin has built a certain reputation as that country's only credible horror film director, and he's fallen on lean times. Like them or not, the movies of Jean Rollin will, in some way, affect you. Critics who hate his films remark on their "amateurism," "cheapness," "slowness," and his "compromising eroticism." Those of us who know better understand Rollin's very personal approach to horror: the peculiar atmosphere they possess, the originality of their execution, and a certain poetry about them which clearly separates his work from other directors worldwide. It is because of Jean Rollin's relentless devotion to the unusual that he deserves sympathy and admiration. Undergoing perpetual commercial constraints, he managed to keep these films — no matter the genre — uniquely his. In his horror films, Rollin's vampires are unlike any other; his fantasy and imagination mock traditional approaches to the vampiric myth, and

KED AND THE DEAD R MEETS JEAN ROLLIN

LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES (1970)

Right: Marie-Pierre Castel and Kuelan
as the sinister servants.

Left: The Queen of the Vampires
(Dominique) and one of her victims.

he likes nothing better than giving that myth a surrealistic bent. Familiar with the rigid framework set down by Universal and Hammer studios, Rollin worked hard to take their tired formula and add his own bizarre touch. The resulting films mentioned in this interview are sheer poetic genius.

M/I talked to Jean Rollin in his Paris apartment at a moment in his life where his career is taking a literature-based turn. The movies he loves to make are hardly possible in a world ruled by television, money, and an overall lack of imagination. Surrounded by numerous books, he shared with *M/I* reflections on his career, style, ideas, and eroticism...

Marcel Burel: You have a book out called *LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES* ("The Two Vampire Orphan Girls"), which incorporates two of your biggest passions: the popular novel and vampires. Was it initially a project for a film? The book has atmosphere which we find in your movies as well.

Jean Rollin: Obviously, my writing is very visual — a cinema-writing — but the book was written a little more than one year ago and could become a film later if I can find the fi-

nancing. At one time I was going to make an adaptation of it for the theater as a play for *Théâtre du Grand-Guignol* in Paris. There would have been a show of three plays like in the good old days. We would have revived two plays of terror from André de Lorde from the beginning of the century, plus a modern play as a curtain-raiser. I had just begun to write the adaptation, but we couldn't find a theater and the project vanished. In other respects, this novel will have a series of sequels: *LE RETOUR DES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES* ("The Return of the Two Vampires Orphan Girls") is already written. There are two other books in the works that will be published soon. They will be part of a new series at "Le Fleuve Noir" and which is called, for the moment, *FRAYEURS* ("Frights").

MB: What about film?

JR: I made a movie last year which is called **UNE FEMME DANGEREUSE** ("A Dangerous Woman"). But that's all. It's a thriller with fantastic ambience. There is nothing irrational in the film, it's just the way I treat it which is close to the fantastic. I made it for theatrical release, but eventually

it will be distributed primarily on video.

MB: How have your films been distributed in the United States?

JR: My very first movies have been shown in theaters in the U.S.A. It was then that the movie business broke down there like ours did here. After initial theatrical runs, there was only a small profit from distribution, then television, and then ... nothing at all! Recently there are some not very honest people who are making illegal video dubs, and we had to lodge a complaint against them. The problem with America is that anything which is not American rarely exist on video tape, so they steal from the authors without paying for the rights. It's not just my movies; they steal from a lot of people. They just duplicate tapes they find in video shops, which explains why what they sell looks so bad. The results are almost unwatchable, and they're putting ads in many film publications. It isn't right and we are prosecuting them. It would have been a lot easier for them — people who are film enthusiasts and collectors — to contact us, and then we would have made a deal for the rights rather than have them steal the films. But it's not only a question of money. I find it un-





The stunning Brigitte Lahaie: a scythe-wielding, blood-drinking wildwoman from Rollin's **FASCINATION** (1979)

pleasant that tapes of my films they distribute in America are of hideous quality. It would have been *very easy* for them to obtain a suitable print from us [as Redemption Video did; see their ad on page 45].

MB: What do you think of the actual revival of old films which are now called *Trash* or *Psychotronic*?

JR: It's a good idea to distribute some old things among which there are probably some very interesting films. However, you have to keep a minimum of critical spirit and not find every product of the 50s and 60s "inspired." That's simply not true. There've been some good films and there've been some really awful ones. In the same way, it's also very stupid to denigrate some "genres" of films where there is always something interesting. For the Americans it's different as they discovered an aspect of movie-making they weren't familiar with before—I mean, the very small independent productions which try to infiltrate the system. They have cheap productions, even grade Z movies which are made by tradesmen with no ambition at all. On the contrary, they also have underground movies made by talented artists. For instance, there are the first films of John Cassavetes. But there is a state of mind, typically European, which consists in making movies cheap — slapdash, but with artistic ambition. The Americans didn't have that, and they are now discovering it. But you

must be able to sincerely say that in some films there is a talented director who is trying to say something with as little money as possible, then there is another one made by a sausage merchant. It's a fairly recent phenomenon. A few years ago, a non-English speaking film wouldn't have sold one copy in America. Now the French versions of my films are bootlegged and distributed with no subtitles, and they are selling many of them.

MB: Your first film was **LE VIOLE DU VAMPIRE** ["The Rape of the Vampire," 1967] in black and white; it created a scandal when it opened. What was shocking at the time, the eroticism?

JR: No, it wasn't eroticism, but rather the Dadaist elements of this movie. People didn't understand the story. It was an amateur film in the sense that for the technical team and actors it was their first movie. Previously, I had just done some shorts. The movie was in large improvisational, and that madness helped it become a minor classic to people nowadays. We shot **LE VIOLE DU VAMPIRE** in 1967 and it opened in May 1968 in the middle of political upheavals and nationwide strikes which shook France. We had raving reviews like in *Le Figaro* where someone wrote: "It looks like a film made by a team of drunkards after a good dinner." The critics fell on us because the film came out during a general strike, and the distributors didn't

want to open any new films that particular week. So all the critics had nothing to watch except my film, and they all saw it. We were covered with insults by absolutely everybody. The only good review that was published was in a Belgian fanzine which talked about "genius!" The people were shouting and whistling in the screening rooms. It was incredible.

MB: The shooting conditions of **LE VIOLE DU VAMPIRE** were quite astonishing I believe ...

JR: Yes, I met a distributor who owned the rights to an American vampire movie, but the film was too short (70mns) and he asked me to shoot a short to flesh it out. At that time my company, A.B.C., could only produce shorts. I met an American producer living in France, Sam Selsky, who found the financing. Completed, the film lasted 45 minutes and Selsky told me, "If we shot 45 minutes for 100,000 francs we could shoot another for 45 minutes and we will have a finished product costing 200,000 francs." The problem was that at the end of the first episode all the characters were dead; that explains the apparition of the Queen of the Vampires bringing back to life the two lovers.

MB: After the largely negative reception of your first movie, how did you manage to make a second one?

JR: It had quite a good run in spite of everything and many people saw it. The exhibi-

tors were happy despite the scandals that the film produced in screening rooms. Once they even were obligated to call the police for an intervention in a theater, *The Scarlet*, because the spectators created an uproar to such a degree ...

MB: Do you think that your movies have aged well?

JR: It depends which ones; if I watch **LA VAMPIRE NUE** ("The Naked Vampire," 1969) again for instance, I believe it has aged a lot and I wouldn't make it the same way nowadays. The price of materials has changed so much that if I was to make it again the budget would be tremendous. There are many sets and lots of characters ... But there exists in these films a certain naivete which is the flavor of the 60s, and a pleasant something—like the perfume of that era.

MB: You've always attached great importance to the sets ...

JR: Yes, the place where we shot **LA VAMPIRE NUE** is a gigantic castle situated at Rochefort sur Yvelines near Paris. It has never been inhabited other than by a few units of the German army during the occupation. It was built by an Austrian diamond merchant at the beginning of the century and it's supposed to be a copy of one of the castles of Louis II of Bavaria. This merchant was in fact a spy and the castle was to be the palace of the Kaiser, if the Germans had won the 1914-18 war. Incredible, isn't it! As they didn't win the war, the castle stayed uninhabited. There are 365 rooms—one for each day of the year and there were good elevators which served as lifts; it was outrageous, an incredible amount of machinery in this place, and it's completely abandoned. It has become difficult to shoot there now, as the place is collapsing.

MB: The first films you made, although full of nudity, aren't very erotic...

JR: Yes, it can't be said that there's a lot of eroticism in **LA VAMPIRE NUE**, but there has been more in the next ones. The reasons are twofold: a commercial criteria that we had to respect, and a personal estheticism. At that time, there were no X-rated movies, so when a film had a little nudity or eroticism, it was shown in a circuit of specialized cinemas like the MIDI MINUIT, the SCARLETT. Now all these screening rooms which were devoted to B movies now only show X movies. But back then, they were playing westerns, thrillers, horror films and what was called "sexy movies." Of those films, the German or Italian movies were considered to be the most sexy! So we had two solutions: we could add a few relatively unoffensive sequences with a couple in bed or we found another way. As I've never

been fond of "bed scenes," I found it more interesting to try to transform that into something which could match better with fantastic and horror. That explains the unclothed girls in surrealistic situations that can be found in some of my movies; that was different compared to the sexy movies of the time.

MB: It has been told that the surrealistic side of the films was yours and that the sexy part came from Sam Selsky.

JR: Well, in fact, Sam Selsky, who is a good American — very traditional — saw our surrealistic meanderings and was naturally a little worried. "Where are we going to show that?" he asked. From an intellectual point of view he found what we were doing interesting. We were still inexperienced filmmakers at the time, so he had the idea to add a little eroticism. In that way we could be sure that the film would find a distributor. Though I've nothing against eroticism, it can't be said that I am crazy about naked girls under veils, but the commercial imperatives require it. I believe that transparent veils in the night is not a really poetic eroticism because it's a little conventional. But visually it's more interesting than if they were fully naked. Let's say that it's a manner to remove a constraint to my profit; some of my movies have been considered erotic wrongly, if you consider **REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE** [CAGED VIRGINS, 1971] which contains only 8 min-

utes of eroticism in its 90 minutes.

MB: What are the erotic sequences that you like most in your films?

JR: I like the confused and perverse relationship which is suggested between the twin girls in **LA VAMPIRE NUE**. Also in **LES RAISINS DE LA MORT** ["The Grapes of Death," 1978] when Lucas becomes mad and, unable to control himself, cuts off the head of his girlfriend, nailing it on a door, and yelling that he loves her. This is tragic and impassioned eroticism. There is also the final sequence in **FASCINATION** [1979] when Fanny Magier says: "you're beautiful like that, with his blood on your mouth." It's one of the most erotic moments that I have ever filmed because it contains emotion.

MB: Do fantasy and pornography go together well on film?

JR: No, I don't think so. We believed it would one time when the X came to France. Many directors like me believed that it was something new and that we could make some experiments, but it's impossible. Because if you're doing a fantasy movie and you put X material in it, the audience for X movies won't get enough of what they want, and the people who like fantasy will leave. Even when you can add eroticism in any kind of movie, it won't work with an X film. It's too direct, too pre-



Beware! It's **LA MORTE VIVANTE**/"Living Dead Girl"(1982)! Actress Françoise Blanchard bares all as the corpse that desires the highball of life: blood!



While trying to get ahead in directing in the French cinema today, Jean Rollin can only manage a foot as an actor in N. G. Mount's TREPANATOR (1992).

cise; it excludes many things. It's like making a thriller where you shoot people for real. It wouldn't work. I tried in 1974 to mix fantasy and X with PHANTASMES ["Phantoms"]/**THE SEDUCTION OF AMY**] and it was a failure because it cost more than an X-rated movie, and it didn't work better. After that, to make a living, I was compelled to make porno movies during a certain period in my life. I was waiting for new projects to become available.

MB: You have used many X Movie actresses in your films ...

JR: Yes, I have nothing against people who have made X movies—I've done some myself. It's not a problem to use them in normal movies. I've been in contact with X actors who were sincerely interested in the profession ... at least when I keep close to this side of the genre. These actors are trying hard to improve themselves and find a way into the profession.

MB: Is Brigitte Lahaie a good example of that?

JR: Not precisely, it didn't happen like that for her. Brigitte had no ambition to become an actress when she began making X-rated movies. And it's by doing them that she began liking this work. Then she became a real comedian, but it wasn't her purpose initially. I hope that we will have the opportunity to work together again.

MB: Have you had problems with the censors?

JR: Two times. The first time with **LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE** where the board of censors required me to cut one shot, it was a sequence of black mass at the *Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*: the elevation of the host. But in fact, all this happened in the middle of a general strike so we couldn't do the cutting and the film opened complete and nobody noticed. The second time it was for **LES RAISINS DE LA MORT** where we nearly got the X certification for violence ... it passed by one vote. And that at the time would have forbidden the opening of the film because it would have been rated X. Although it wasn't pornogra-

phy no theater would have accepted it. You have to remember that when the X law came it was done hypocritically because it all began with people adding hardcore sequences in some movies. I had been asked to do the same, especially with **LES DÉMONIAQUES** ["Demoniacs," 1973], but I always refused. Finally, in 1974, when the board of censors realized that in fact there were movies circulating with added sequences, they decided to stem the flow of these films by making certain decrees. For us B movie directors it was a dreadful disaster as all the theaters that previously specialized in B movies changed their venues to porno movies. It was the case with **LÈVRES DE SANG** ["Lips of Blood," 1975] which wasn't badly distributed initially, however the week that the film opened pornography was allowed in the French theaters and all the screening rooms which were supposed to show my film changed their bookings to X-rated movies. Sadly, **LÈVRES DE SANG** opened completely unnoticed.

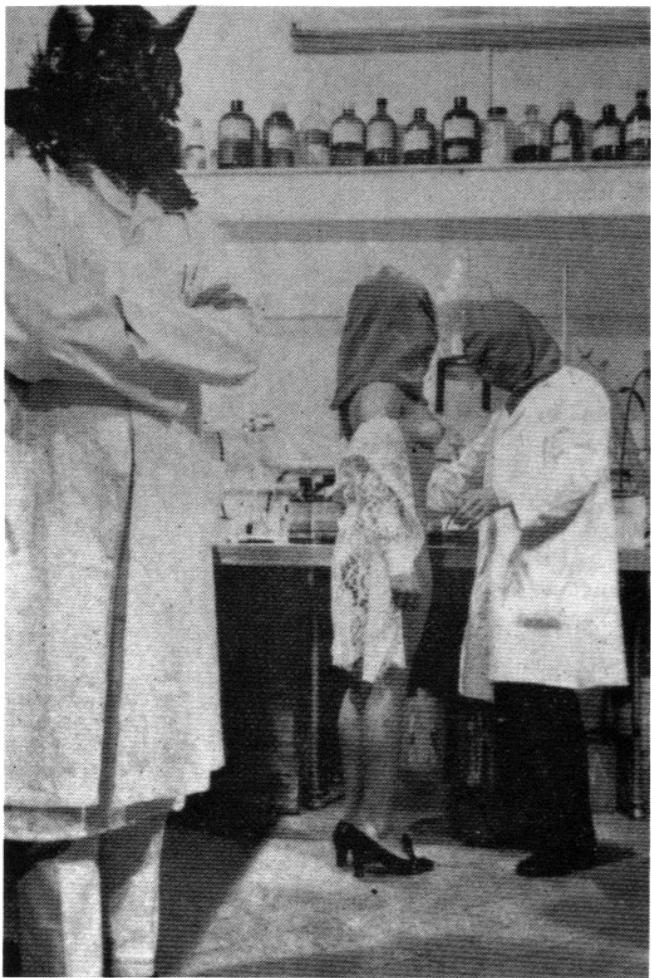
MB: Where did your initial interests in vampires come from?

JR: The answer is probably a result of the first horror film I saw when I was 10 ... it was a mistake! My mother sent me one afternoon to the theater and we thought we were going to see a western. However, there was a misinterpretation of the posters in the front of the theater, and the western was going to be shown the week after. So, instead, we saw a horror movie which absolutely terrified me; it was a vampire story. It took me 20 years to find the title, and it turned out to be **HOUSE OF DRACULA** [1944, D: Erle C. Kenton] in which there was Lon Chaney, Jr. as the werewolf, the Frankenstein creature, and the Vampire. Later on, as a filmmaker I was interested by the fantastic and its surrealistic side — the use of collage, the freedom to arrange things in a way which is not logical or rational.

With my taste for the unusual, I find most interesting those monsters that are most human. Take the vampire; apart from some fetish elements, he is an attractive person like a normal human being, especially if the vampire is a woman. In comparison, the werewolf, creatures of some mad doctor, etc. are distorted characters. The vampire is a poetic myth because he is the myth of fascination, and the werewolf, for instance, is repulsive.

MB: You've never been tempted by other myths? I remember you had a couple of projects concerning the werewolf...

JR: There was **LA LOUVE SANGLANTE** ["The Bloody She Wolf"] and **BESTIALITE** ["Beastiality"] which will become a novel. But in these stories the transformation was from a superb human creature — a woman — straight into an animal. There wasn't any



On this page: exciting scenes from Rollin's **LA VAMPIRE NUE**/"The Nude Vampire"(1969). Odd experiments and rituals commence in the office-laboratory of George Radamant, rich industrialist and dabbler in the occult.

LA VAMPIRE NUE!

werewolf with its hybrid human side ...

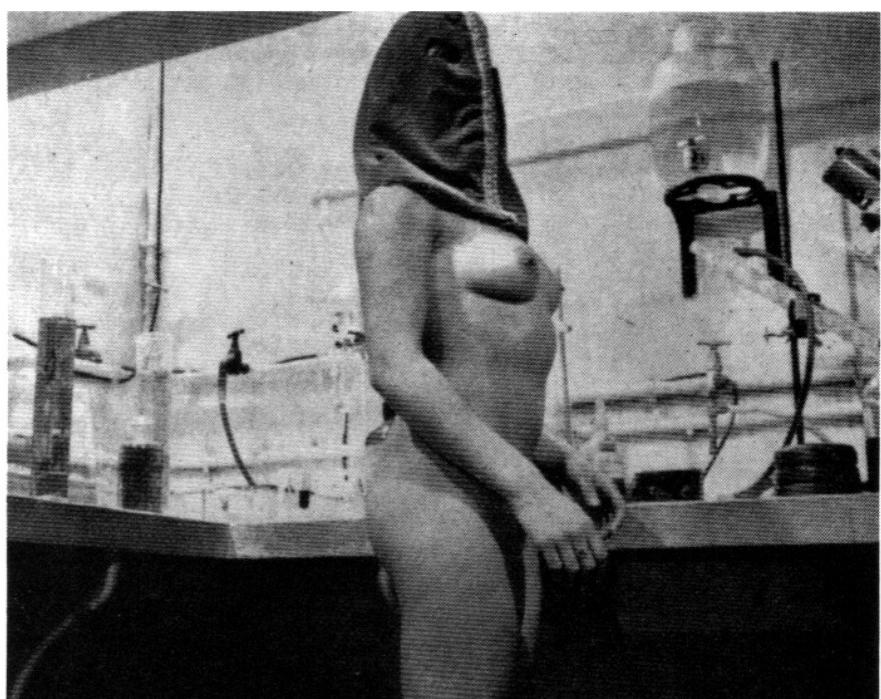
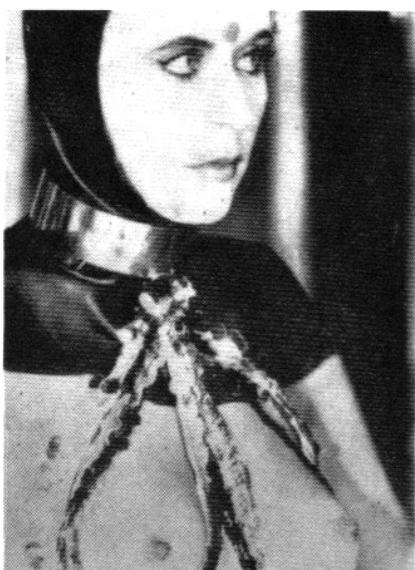
MB: You're not interested in Frankenstein?

JR: I don't know why, but the myth of the creature doesn't intrigue me. The same goes for the living dead; they don't arouse my curiosity because of the inhuman element. Their robot side removes the poetry. The only exception is **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** [1968] which is a total suc-

cess; formidably effective. When I did **LE RAISINS DE LA MORT**, I came to the decision to make the opposite of what George Romero did. **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** is based on claustrophobia; we did the contrary: our characters are roaming in open space. Whereas the

zombies of Romero are creatures with no conscience, our monsters are perfectly conscious, and they suffer from their condition.

MB: With all the projects concerning *Dracula* and vampires last year, haven't you



tried to shoot a new vampire movie?

JR: I tried. I've done what I could to be able to make **LE RETOUR DE DRACULA** ["The Return of Dracula"] which is a completed and rather humorous script which I am very fond of. I contacted all the TV channels in France, and found absolutely nobody wanting to produce it. I contacted the TV networks because it's actually impossible to shoot a film if you don't have a big budget, some big-named stars, and already have the rights sold to television. When we told them that we wanted to do this film, and to open it after the Coppola movie so it would be a success, they didn't want to do it. They didn't think that Coppola's **DRACULA** [1993] would work at all, though by the end, of course, it was a success.

MB: In the past years, you've had a lot of projects that didn't work ... the one with the late Joe Spinell for instance?

JR: Yes, I met Joe Spinell at the Sitges Film festival [in Spain] and we met again another time and he was enthusiastic to make a film with Brigitte Lahaie and thought it could be fun to come to Paris. We had the idea to make a vampire movie whose title parodied **AN AMERICAN IN PARIS** [1951 D: Vincente Minnelli], and it was called **AN AMERICAN VAMPIRE IN PARIS**; a good title. Alan Petit wrote the script, which wasn't bad at all, but Joe Spinell, who was a very peculiar character, went back to the States where he lived with his mother. We tried to contact him again one or two times, but it was very difficult and everything stopped there. He died sometime after. With Brigitte Lahaie we had a project called **BESTIALITE** in which she transforms into a beast. There was the other werewolf project, **LA LOUVE SANGLANTE**, which I had initially casted a part for Joelle Coeur, and then Tina Aumont agreed to do it. Brigitte was also cast to do another movie with little Yoko [who, in 1984, starred in **LES TROTTOIRS DE BANGKOK** "The Side-walks of Bangkok" for Rollin as well as a few X-rated movies]. There was a script I liked a lot called **ENFER PRIVE** ["Private Hell"] which I eventually turned into a book.

Among other plans, there was **BLOC MENTAL** which was a little in the style of a Cronenberg film or Brian De Palma's **FURY** [1978]. Along with three friends, Jean Pierre Bouyxou, Alain Petit and Pierre Pattin, I wrote a gory script titled **HECATOMBE** ["Sllaughter"]. I also worked on a "Bluebeard" project - a Countess Bathory production which was supposed to be shot in the Soviet Union, and a "Gilles de Rais" project [Gilles de Rais was One of Joan of Arc's lieutenant who later became an infamous serial killer of his time, he is called the "French Bluebeard"]. I was supposed to make a film called **LE CULTE DU VAMPIRE** ["The Cult of the Vampire"] whose

title changed to **LES AVENTURES D'ANNIE** ["The Adventures of Annie"]. Do you want some more? **JUNGLE GODDESS**, **LES CHERCHEURS DE MYSTERES** ["The Secret of Mystery"], **LE DEMOISELLES DE L'ETRANGE** ["Strange Little Girls"]...

MB: Are you fond of private jokes in your films?

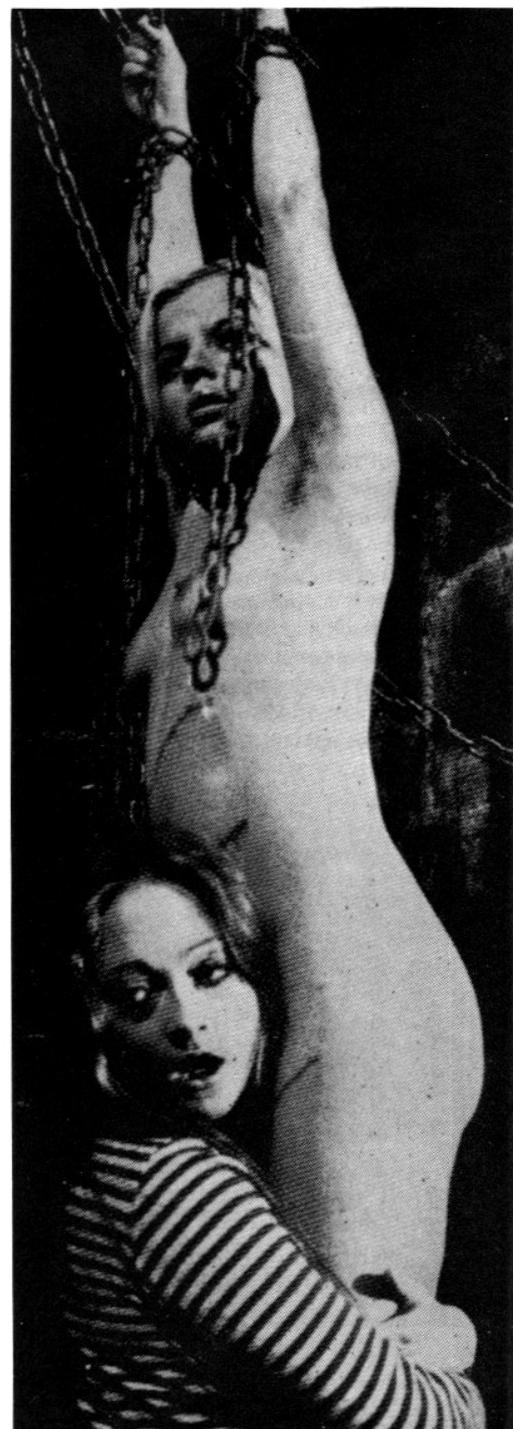
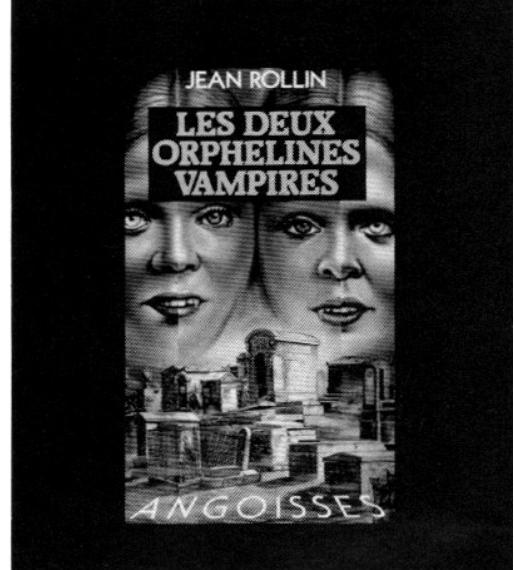
JR: Yes, I like that. I have a habit of repeating images that I have already used in my other movies. I change them and use them differently. For instance, the clown: I put one in **REQUIME POUR UN VAMPIRE**, but I wasn't completely satisfied so I used another one in **LA ROSE DE FER** ["The Iron Rose," 1972] and in **LES DEMONIAQUES**. The same for clocks: I had a woman emerging from a clock at the stroke of midnight in **LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES** ["The Thrill of the Vampires," 1970], and then in a particular scene in my newest film **UNE FEMME DANGEREUSE**, I had the killer woman hidden in a clock when everyone is looking for her in the room. I've also put this clock sequence in some of my books...

MB: Are you interested in other genres other than the fantastic?

JR: I find it interesting to be able to make images from my imagination. For that, the fantastic genre is the best. Imagine a woman coming from a clock in a context which is not fantastic - it's difficult to believe. But if I was asked to make another style of film where I could drop some personal inclinations, I would do it. The most difficult film to make is a comedy. I don't feel that I am capable of making a comedy... although at the beginning of my career my movies made a lot of people laugh!

Involved with French film publications for over twenty years, Marcel has written for **MAD MOVIES**, **IMPACT**, **TRAVELLING**, **CINE ZINE ZONE**, **MONSTER BIS**, and was the French film correspondent for the German magazine **VAMPRI**. He also published his own fanzines: **THE BAT** and **FANTAZINE**. He is currently collaborating on a book about fantasy/horror films that will be published next year.

Top: The cover to Jean Rollin's current novel, "*The Two Vampire Orphan Girls*." **Right:** Marie-Pierre Castel and Mireisle d'Argent in **REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE/CAGED VIRGINS** (1971).





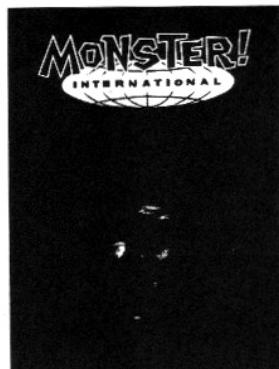
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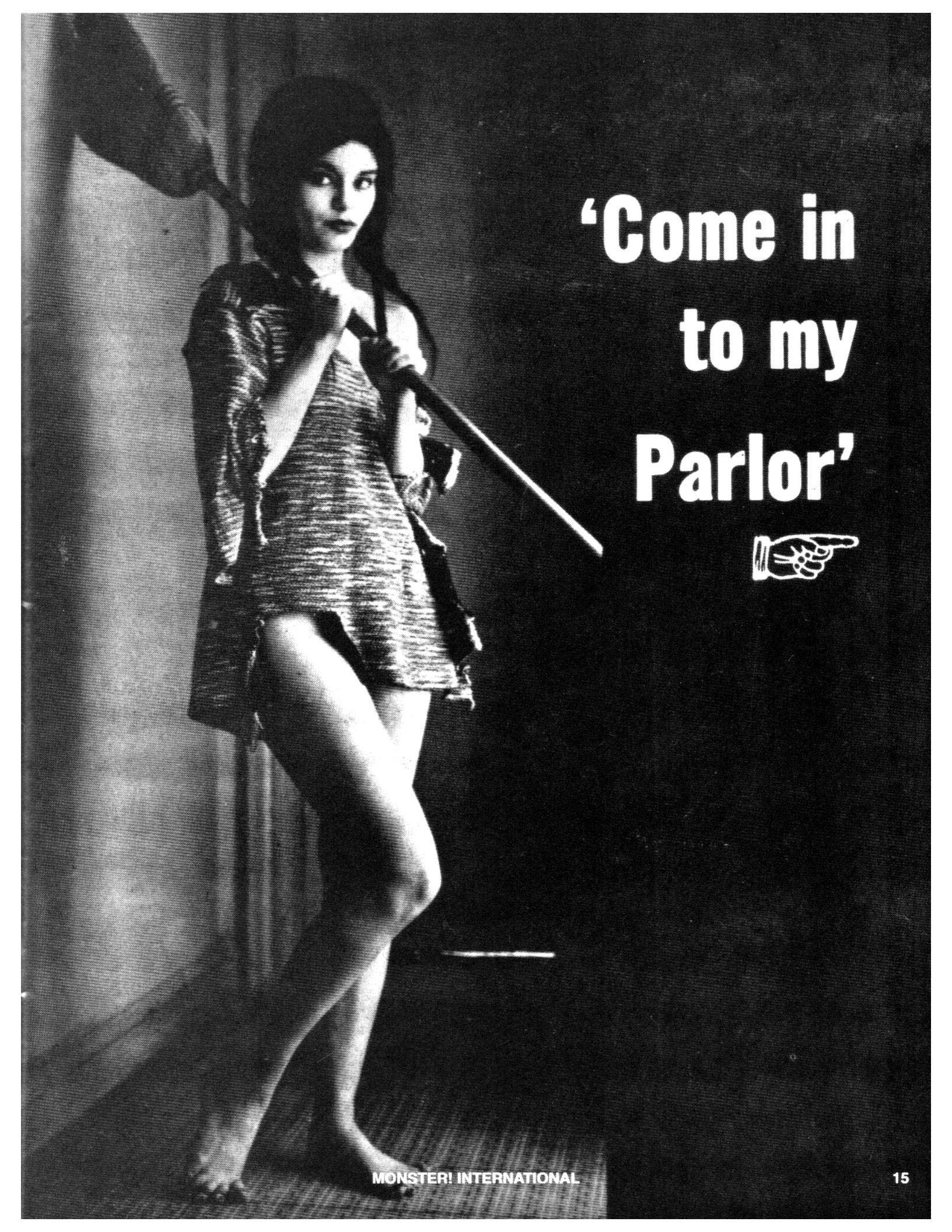
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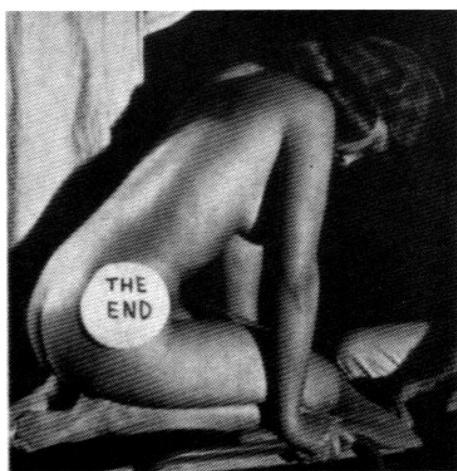


"Got the world on a string,"
hums our ghoul Nini-Poo, she's
a poor little witch girl with
nothing to do. So she conjures up
things, as she lies in her sack,
to drive people crazy—she
sure has the knack.

"Housework is such a bore; clean
the coffins, mop up the gore.
But guests are coming, fiends
galore, vampires, monsters,
witches and more. So to sweep,
and then to cook—I'll whip up
a batch of gobbledegook."



"Double, double, toil and trouble,
fire bake and cauldron bubble.
This stuff is good, rich and hot,
you'd never guess who's in the pot!"



OF BROADS & BRUTES!

SEXY, SLEAZY PULP-STYLE MONSTERS

by STEVE FENTONE

"Well, it was half-past night at the movie show / I parked my baby in the very last row / We were just makin' love / kinda foolin' around / When the monster appeared with this crazy sound / My baby looked up / Kinda mesmerized / And she gave a long moan / And much to my surprise / Said, this monster's the most / I'm his number one fan / Cuz I've fallen in love with this monster man"

Lyrics from
SHE'S FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A MONSTER MAN
by The Revillos



BREASTS AND BEASTS have been inseparably intertwined in fantasy cinema since a certain giant bull gorilla first tore the French undies off a certain squealing blonde in **KING KONG** (1933, D: Merian C. Cooper). "Twas beauty killed the beast," went the old saying. Before it killed him, though, beauty invariably also thrilled the beast...

Likewise in 1933, in Erle C. Kenton's **ISLAND OF LOST SOULS**, Lota the doe-eyed Panther Woman (Kathleen Burke) was created by Charles Laughton's Dr. Moreau for the express purpose of providing sex (of both the procreational and the recreational kind).

By the end of that landmark year, aboveground American pulp fiction magazines began flirting with themes of horror, the supernatural — and S-E-X. Dubbed "weird menace" stories, periodicals like **SPICY MYSTERY STORIES**, **TERROR TALES**, **HORROR STORIES** and **ACE MYSTERY** (all founded circa 1933 to 1936) began more and more to accent erotic titillation along with their other cheap thrills. Culture Publications' **SPICY MYSTERY STORIES** was one of the first such titles, a mutant hybridization of popular publications like **WEIRD TALES**, **SNAPPY STORIES** and **DIME MYSTERY MAGAZINE**. **SPICY** story titles included Robert Leslie Bellem's "Fangs of the Bat" (1935). Many intriguing titles followed, such as "Lobster Girl" (a crustaceous cutiepie?), "Ghoul's Nightmare," "Hands of the Undead," "The Cat Tastes Blood," "Hell's Tryst" and the Bacchanalian "Pact of the Wine God." Circa 1937, a regular B&W comic strip was added that revolved around the strange adventures of a (frequently underdressed) heroine named Olga Mesmer, thus further cementing the direct connection between sequential art and pulp literature.

Stories invariably dealt with beautiful young women threatened — life, limb and libido — by what often appeared to be paranormal forces. Out of an average of nine novelettes and short stories per issue, two or three were usually of the "weird menace" category. Returns from beyond the grave, scary skeletons, monsters, lycanthropy, subhumanoid brutemen, transference of souls, witchcraft and Satanic pacts were common fodder for pulpsters' purple pens. Central to each story of course was the heroine, who found herself in constant jeopardy of losing both her pink lace camiknickers and her virtue to some scaled or deformed whtsit with an oversized...ahem...sex-drive. A typical scenario of the era unfolded in "The Corpse's Wedding" (1940), about an embalmed Egyptian pervert and his decomposing zombie slaves molesting a swooning, bandage-swathed blonde.

Ghoul-meets-girl fiction itself was jeopardized in the mid-thirties by a public outcry against such periodicals, calling them "indecent" and a threat to the moral majority (a comparable blockade railed against comics and pulps in the '50s). Indeed, fair damsel-jeopardized-by-fearsome-monster has been a recurrent mythological motif from antiquity to the present, even something that the aligned forces of censorship have been hard-put to stop. Even during the Victorian era durable prototypes were found in the "dime novels" (known as "penny dreadfuls" in Britain).

WEIRD TALES, founded in 1923, often emphasized the exoticism of Amazonian warrior women, pagan priestesses and princesses; as in the wispy-gowned woman of Seabury Quinn's demon-filled "The Chapel of Mystic Horror" (1928) and the killer gorilla with cringing half-nude girl of Robert E. Howard's Conan tale, "Shadows in the Moonlight" (1932). Established in 1926, Hugo Gernsback's **AMAZING STORIES** frequently bolstered sales with gossamer-veiled nymphs and grotesque beasties on its covers. In 1927, the **AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL** ran Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Master-Mind of Mars," and suggestive cover art depicted lovely Barsoomian babe Valla Dia revealing a little too much cleavage while laid out on the operating table of a googly-eyed alien surgeon, Ras Thavas. Come the swingin' 1930s, the pulps perpetuated and elaborated upon long-established myths and hoary cliches; Alex Raymond's legendary "Flash Gordon" comic strips (begun in 1934) often pitted monsters against girls, and often glanced upon mild S&M.

Imitative strips in later British mags like **SUPER DUPER COMICS** and **THE MIGHTY ATOM** (both 1948) featured "Satin Astro," respectively, a slinky space dominatrix in head-to-toe leather, and a blonde having her mini-dress rearranged by a tendrilled plant monster (she also reveals a little too much thigh when tied up by "Thin Men" creatures). While implicit, sex was still a very important selling point.

A leering, topless snakewoman (with blonde tresses carefully positioned over her naughty bits) graced the cover of **OTHER WORLDS SCIENCE STORIES** (1947). But mostly, the 1940s — as personified by the starchier, more conservative B-movie output of that decade — were a rela-

tively barren period for the printed form. However, a definite feast for sex-starved monsters occurred during the 1950s, when pap literature and pop cinema combined forces to cement potent stereotypes that endure still.

BEMs ("Bug-Eyed Monsters") menacing scantily-clad heroines grew to new prominence in the 1950s via such American SF pulps as **PLANET STORIES** and **OUT OF THIS WORLD ADVENTURES**, along with their British counterparts like **SCIENCE-FANTASY** and **FANTASTIC STORY QUARTERLY**. Exemplary artists like Virgil Finlay commonly combined voluptuously exotic "space babes" with bizarre lifeforms. The most potent and famous '50s movie symbol on the theme is the piscine Gillman menacing bathing-suited Julia Adams in **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** (1953, D: Jack Arnold), wherein state-of-the-art 3-D photography made best use of both the fishman and the bathing belle's peculiar physical attributes. And who can soon forget the intoxicating sex-charge of jiggly-cavegirl-vs.-prehysterical-critter pix like **PREHISTORIC WOMEN** (1950, D: Greg Tallas), **UNTAMED WOMEN** (1952, D: W. Merle Connell) and **VALLEY OF THE DRAGONS** (1961, D: Edwards Bernds)? Roger Corman had originally tackled "monster/girl" relationships more implicitly in such sci-fi potboilers as **DAY THE WORLD ENDED** (1955) and **IT CONQUERED THE WORLD** (1956). Later Corman films **HUMANOIDS FROM THE DEEP** (1980, D: Barbara Peeters) — featuring topless girls "mating" with slimy fishmen — and **GALAXY OF TERROR** (1981, D: B. D. Clark) — featuring a topless astronaut raped by a slimy caterpillar monster — visualized the fetishistic image in much more explicit terms (spoofed to the hilt in The Cramps' oft-banned vid, "The Creature from the Black Leather Lagoon").

During the fledgling fifties, conservative social attitudes forced filmmakers to use more discretion. Eroticism was snuggled comfy and cosy beneath a blanket of symbolism, metaphor and double entendre. While semi-subterranean grindhouses were revealing more and more skin in gratuitous sleaze cheesecake fare like **HOLLYWOOD CONFIDENTIAL** (1950) and **BAD GIRLS DO CRY** (1954), the mainstream cinema — monster films inclusive — steered well clear of overt sexual topics.

A poster for Reginald Le Borg's **VOODOO ISLAND** (1955) showed a screaming young starlet with the sucker tendril of an especially fresh woman-eating plant affixed to a strategic item of her upper torso. Suggestive press photos for **THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD** (1957, D: Arnold Laven) showed swimsuited leading lady Audrey Dalton loomed over by a suspiciously penile slimy sea monster. Riccardo Freda's **I VAMPIRI** (1957), was released stateside as **THE DEVIL'S COMMANDMENT**: "Beautiful girls become the victims of the most terrifying bloodlust ever shown on the screen!" boasted the trailer. "Come with this girl into bondage in a castle of horror!" In the Meximonster comedy, **CONQUISTADOR DE LA LUNA** / "Conqueror of the Moon" (1960, D: Rogelio A. González), a bound señorita met a phallic eyeball on a stalk drooling spunkly space-spume. It was not until **FLESH GORDON** (1974, D: Howard Ziehm), however, that post-'60s "immorality" permitted literal depiction of an actual "Penisaurus" molesting a shrieking Earth-chick. Then came Walerian Borowczyk's **LA BÊTÉ/THE BEAST** (1975) Andrzej Zulawski's **POSSESSION** (1984) and the Japanese porn-monster of Kazuo Komizu's **BIJO NO HARAWATA** / "Entrails of a Beautiful Woman" (1986), all of which took interspecies romance to new highs (lows?) of depravity by depicting explicit bestial copulation.

Back in the Fabulous Fifties, a decade probably closest to the heart of many **MONSTER! INTERNATIONAL** readers, things were far more naive. Stacked broads menaced by monstrous brutes attained a seldom-equalled plateau of libidinous potency without having to resort to gross-out tactics. My pseudonymous associate, "Dr. Z" — former '50s beatnik jazz musician, hot-rodder and now respectable Ivy League professor at a prominent North American university — fondly remembers the illicit titillation value of trashy B-movies and "under-the-counter" pulp digest magazines.

Important elements in the pulps were paganism and exoticism, seasoned with healthy doses of sin and sado-masochism. Freakish villains, reanimated corpses and she-monsters often seemed to play second fiddle to the more important T&A ingredients. While specifics like aureolae and genitalia were only alluded to in the vaguest of terms, more generic fleshly terrain such as bosoms, hips and thighs were described using the most pneumatic adjectives. Inspiration for most pulp heroines seemed to be drawn from the feminine denizens of smoky burlesque cabarets or the pin-up



SATAN'S BALLET

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THE WOMAN YOU LOVED LEFT YOU FOR SATAN?

women found in men's cheesecake "glamour" magazines. Cover art often showed terrorized young women reduced to little more than their pulchritude and skimpy underwear or bikinis being menaced by demons, devil-worshippers and hunchbacks. No actual nudity was seen, but cleavage, gams and – God forbid! – navels were often brazenly on display. Whips, chains, ropes and manacles often played important roles in these crude, lurid compositions. Women invariably found themselves either helplessly subjugated or otherwise imperilled, be it by Man or Monster.

A veteran purveyor of prurient pulp was Irving Klaw, sleazy Svengali to Bettie (né Betty) Page and a primitivist exponent of "naive bondage sculpture" in innumerable '50s photo layouts and comicstrips. Although Klaw's hand-drawn pen and ink S&M strips never revealed true nudity (i.e., naughty nipples or pubic hair), they were steeped in Sadean fetishism to a degree verging on psychotic delirium.

Klaw, too, sexploited the "Girl meets Monster" science fiction craze that took hold during the mid-'50s. One of his bondage strips – drawn by a frequent Klaw artist known only as "Jim" – was entitled "Baroness Steel". The token plotline concerned Elissa, the title's ruthless matriarch/flagellatrix, who runs a tight household using equal parts automation and domination. Towering metallic robots truss up and torment cringing girlies with twin-torpedo chests and wasp waists, who are also subjected to wearing iron masks and gags, steel-plated chastity belts and armoured brassieres while teetering atop vertiginous stiletto heels. Following the format of Klaw's more mundane B&D strips, "Baroness Steel" was broken down into separate one-page "Episodes" consisting of two comic panels and a block of descriptive text:

#21: *Steelama, the electronic robot, obeyed the instructions of Elissa as if it*

had a human brain of its own, grasping the terrified and screaming ring-leader in its mighty steel claws and proceeding to do Elissa's bidding as she sat before the control panels and worked the dials.

#22: *Steelama, the electronic robot, operating by remote control instructions sent to it by the wireless set run by Elissa, grabbed hold of the unwilling victim, bound unbreakable chains on her and brought her to the new disciplinary dungeon ...*

#23: *Under Elissa's bidding, the robot bolted down another struggling servant girl who incurred Elissa's displeasure. The robot's iron claw held the girl down to a steel table, while Elissa helped bolt the steel shackles and clamps around the servant's body. The frightened girl could not utter a word as the robot's hands clenched her windpipe and she was just a hair's breadth away from suffocation when the robot released its vise-like grip from her throat.*

One of Klaw's publishing competitors – who was not averse to actually showing partial nudity – printed a sexy science fiction strip primatively drawn by "ENEQ" (aka Gene Bilbrew) entitled "High Heels in the Heavens." The thrust of its narrative was the old tentacled-alien-blobbing-meets-buxotic-Earthchick-in-spiked-heels scenario: Planet Klaxto Needs Women! In addition to bare breasts and cephalopodic octopoids with overactive hormones, the strip boasted a "Ming the Merciless of Mongo"-styled intergalactic villain threatening to blast Earth out of our puny solar system using a mega-bomb from an orbiting space station.

Sin and skin had long been marketed wholesale in hard-boiled crime rags like SPICY DETECTIVE (1934-42), TWO-FISTED DETECTIVE TALES, KEYHOLE DETECTIVE STORIES and OFF BEAT DETECTIVE STORIES (all circa early-1960s). Despite eloquent titles like "Soft Arms – Bloody

Hands!," "Soft Angel of Mayhem" and "The Devil is a Dame," storylines were generally non-fantastic. Mobsters, psycho killers and sex perverts were the favorite vile – but resoundingly human – monsters of misogynistic tales like "Horror Needs a Witness!" ("... I cut the clothes right off her. She jerks like crazy when I smack her across her bare flesh with my studded belt"); and "Lovelies Are for Lynching!" ("With his free hand he tore at her clothes, ripping them cruelly from her young body until she was exposed to the waist").

One of the key American "sex horror" cheapie titles of the early '60s was SHOCK MYSTERY TALES MAGAZINE, from Pontiac Publishing of NYC. For the exorbitant sum of 35 cents, readers could enter a world of sex-and-blood-soaked horror. Among SHOCK MYSTERY's recurring erotic themes was that old standby combining sssnakes with sssex. "Curse of the Serpent Goddess" (Vol.2, #1) came out just in time for Christmas, 1962. "*I watched her swaying seductively before the great altar. And then I saw the terrible thing taking shape in the darkness!*" teased a teaser. Authorship was credited to one Bill Ryder, whose tastes tended to lean toward the more irreligious side of things (earlier that same year he contributed "Satan's Ballet," "Death's Cold Arms" and "Soft Hands of Madness"). Ryder evidently received much of his inspiration hanging out in beatnik strip joints just like the story's sleazy Seminole Club.

It wasn't the dancer alone. It was the huge fer-de-lance which slid its body over her milk white flesh, its gigantic fangs glistening in the light. Slowly, indolently her hips gyrated in time to the ever mounting bongo beat. Her slim arms moved in a weaving, graceful pattern. I found myself being drawn to the edge of my seat by the exotic motions of the woman. Her fingers ran through her raven hair, then worked their way down over her face and throat. They slid caressingly over her breasts and flanks. Call it whatever you will, obscene, passionate, primitive, it was the most unusual performance I had ever seen ... Her blood red tongue worked feverishly through her dazzling teeth, keeping time to the forked tongue of the snake. Her head wove slowly back and forth. Her entire body undulated like some beautiful and obscene reptile squirming over a tree branch. Every motion had a fluid rhythm that was jungle borne [sic].

The hero soon encounters a Miami-based snake worshipping Voodoo sect of the God of Evil, the Hellish Master, the Great God Anaconda "whose history goes back to the viper in Eden." The cult is led by Conchita, a seductive Hispanic Serpent Princess who shrinks the heads of vestal virgins and wears them as costume jewelry. Things get more daring still when the hero falls into the snakechick's coils:

Conchita's supple hips ground into my loins. The fires of desire raced through me. My arms encircled the Serpent Woman, testing her cool smooth flesh. She wriggled deliciously against me ... and ... the giant fer-de-lance wriggling up Conchita's alabaster legs. The head grew as the reptile slithered up over Conchita's thighs and hips ...

Crammed into the same action-packed issue were Don Unatin's "Brides for the Devil's Cauldron" ("Evil stalked the night in search of beautiful victims!"), Jim Arthur's "The Damned of Terror Island," Art Crockett's "I Am the Monster" ("At night I turn into a marauding fiend!"), and Anthony Stuart's "Vengeance of the Undead" ("He'd returned from the torture chambers of the ages!").

The very next issue (Vol.2, #2, March, 1962) was another heady cocktail of pleasure and pain, pent-up passions and pliant pagan priestesses. Stories included Craighton Lamont's "Satan's Mistress," William S. Duhart's "The Devil's Caress" (a frigid/nymphomaniac-feminist-meets-gangster S&M lust story), Jim Barnett's "Brides of Pain" and Anthony Stuart's "Horror Island." Bob Shields' "Lust of the Jungle Goddess," set in a fetid South American rain forest, gets off to a promising start with such typical plot devices as animalistic nocturnal screams, a "Society of Psychical Research" and Voodoo, as well as bataulo, a Haitian herbal drug used in the zombification process. Also present is the cruel Ormulu, a skinnydipping, platinum-haired jungle siren whose doped-up native followers, called Hawk Men, almost gang-rape Lita, the stripped heroine ... but nothing even remotely resembling a monster shows up, for shame.

Issue #3, Volume 2 (May 1962) of SHOCK MYSTERY TALES con-



tained still another variation on the fork-tongued snake priestess theme, Stuart Wood's "Bride of the Serpent Demon." In one of the mag's more blatantly sexual offerings, that eternal horrotaica motif – girl meets snake – once again slithered by as a paganistic "anti-Eve" tangled with a vampiristic serpentine deity in sweaty Louisiana bayou country. Nanette Dolane, the (bisexual!) heroine finds herself chosen as nubile neophyte for the supernatural monster's blood feast:

I could see Nanette lying naked and bound hand and foot on the great red altar stone. THE THING glistened like a great fiery eye in the dim light given off by monstrous black candles. The light flickered over my fiancee's nude body, bathing her loveliness in a hellish glow ... "Great beast of blackness and sin, accept the blood of this girl. Lead us into the ways of temptation. Lead us into shadowed chambers where we can enjoy the vilest crimes, the most abominable vices ..." The dreadful liturgy of evil – the call to Gran Zombi, the voodoo snake god – dinned into my unbelieving ears. Angelina, the high priestess, stood on a sort of raised dais. Her name meant "Little Angel," and that was the most gruesome jest that I had ever heard ... Angelina's nude and tanned body swayed sensuously. With slow, languorous motions, to the beat of bongo drums, she was substituting a seven-foot boa for her god, guiding it obscenely with her twisting hands ... The snake's tail was coiled about her neck. She loved the feel of its scaly body against her skin. She moved her shapely legs further and further apart as she maneuvered the snake's pulsating muscular body. Slowly, slowly she was rotating her hips from side to side ... Her hips began to move faster, writhing from side to side like wild things. Her breasts thrust out free, proud and firm, bathed by the evil caress of the candlelight. Angelina closed her black eyes, now utterly possessed, drunk with abominable rapture. She put both hands to the back of her neck, swept her luxurious black hair upward in a pile, held it there ... Wickedly, she widened her stance as the boa heaved and writhed and pulsed – seven feet of rippling muscle.

A Robert E. Howard-styled ethereal snake-spirit, implied lesbianism, chilled highballs, incense, still more throbbing bongos and snake-headed concubines also figure. And let's not forget the hero's snakey hallucinogenic vision:

... fiends and monsters fought and tore each other. They were fearsome abominations – ghastly things with misshapen heads, bodies covered with scales or filthy, scabrous hides. Lovely young girls – blondes, redheads, brunets [sic] and raven-haired beauties – were being horribly tortured ... Sometimes the torturing was being done by bestial-looking men, but mostly hideous gargoyles [sic], fiends and demons were the torturers. I saw – or thought I saw – vile orgies, loathsome creatures fondling beautiful young women of all races ...

Rounding out this feverish issue were Craighton Lamont's "Terror Castle" ("Death would come. The fiend made that much clear."), James Barnett's "Curse of the Undead" ("The prophecy of doom reached from the coffin, shrouding Lorraine in a blanket of icy fear!"), Larry Dickson's "Black Chapel," Bill Ryder's "Death's Cold Arms" and Alan Lance's "Lust of the Vampire Queen" ("Her eager lips found mine, and for a moment I was lost in her beauty").

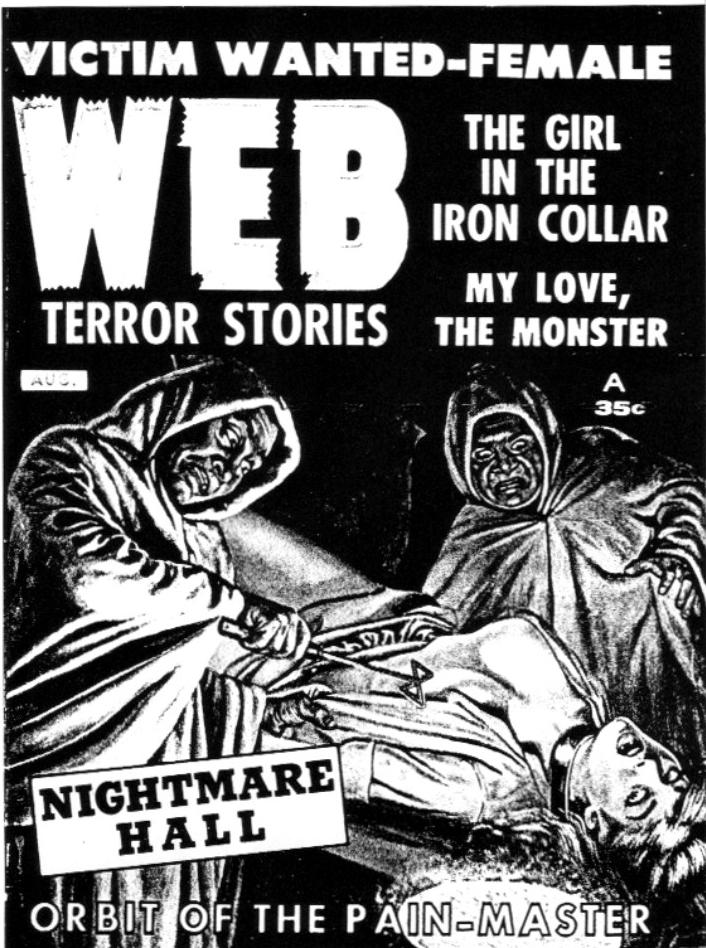
Anthony Stuart's "Lovely Maiden from Hell" ("In horror they saw the world's most celebrated beauty turn into a hideous thing before their eyes!") bears some notable similarities to the recent US horror cheapie, **THE RE-JUVENATOR** (1991, D: Brian Thomas Jones). Karamenah Siva is an eternally youthful Eurasian movie goddess whose most famous film is SATAN'S MISTRESS. She lives in Hollywood at Crome Mansion with her "bestial, subhuman, cadaverous albino" sidekick, Thak. Our lissome heroine soon experiences a big Thak attack:

Unaware that the albino's piggish eyes were watching her through her half-open bedroom door, Eva had just selected a pair of lacy black panties from her bureau drawer and slipped her long silken legs through them ... Pulling the wispy transparency of the panties over the inviting curvature of her hips, Eva slipped her soft shoulders into her black bra ... Thak's monstrous shadow loomed in the doorway ... A gasp of dry horror escaped her lips as she saw mad and lust-filled eyes staring out of the corpselike twisted mask of horror that was the albino's face ... Thak shuffled forward into the room

LOVELY MAIDEN FROM HELL



"**MY GOD,**" EVA MOANED IN A
TERRIFIED WHISPER, "O, MY GOD!"



... Eva's soft flesh crawled with horror as she realized the meaning of the queer twisted light that gleamed in the monster's reptile eyes... Eva bit her painted lips ... Thak towered over her ... Suddenly Thak and Eva were prostrate on her bed, his vile hands ripping at her panties, tearing the bra from her breasts. His hideous face came close to hers, the thick lips wet with saliva ... "My God," Eva moaned in a terrified whisper. "O, my God!"

The desiccated bodies of a number of starlets are found ("... little more than skin and bones - like a fly sucked dry by a spider"). Four out of five doctors soon concur that vain Karamenah is in reality a Homo Araneidae ("a human spider") who has been slurping the life essence out of plump ingenues in order to maintain her photogenic looks.

... that is what we are up against, I'm afraid - a loathsome insect with the exterior appearance of breathtaking female loveliness, a creature that renews itself by sucking the blood of its victims — beautiful young girls, possibly young men.

Before you can sing "Itsy-Bitsy Spider," the buggy broad is incinerated in a burning limousine.

SHOCK MYSTERY TALES' archetypical short story was perhaps Alan Lance's "Handmaidens of the Monster" (Vol.2, #4, July 1962). This was related in the first person by the hero, a Hollywood special effects man (!):

Lately, I've been working on these "monster" pictures. You've probably seen the kind I mean ... THE MONSTER FROM MARS ... or maybe CREATURE FROM THE CENTER OF THE EARTH ... I build the mechanical monsters and the miniature cities that they destroy on film. When the cameras are rolling, I throw the switches that send a foam rubber dragon lumbering through the streets of New York ... or maybe it's giant ants in Chicago. It's all phony as hell, but it's a living.

The hero's latest assignment is CURSE OF THE FROG GIRL, whose "leading lady" is an actual Amazonian amphibian:

Her body was trim and well-formed like a beauty contest winner, but her skin was coarse [sic] and rough ... like moist green leather ... like a frog! She had long silky hair that fell softly across her shoulders, but it was light green like her body. And her face! Those enormous bug-eyes and the toothless wide-mouthed grin belonged only on a frog!

When Ms. Frogface is killed and her star vehicle scrapped, the studio proposes a new project, REVENGE OF THE RAT MAN (!!), starring - yep - a real Rat Man. It turns out both humanimals have been created by a megalomaniacal geneticist, a poor man's Moreau named Silas DeMal who mutates folks for fun and profit with the help of his sado seven-foot lab assistant, Rogo. Next on the agenda is a brand new Frog Girl:

Rogo unlocked the second cage and ducked inside. He came out a moment later dragging a girl ... a beautiful nude girl! ... Her body was twisting and pulsing with shock waves of terror. The delicate lines of her face were drawn tight with terror, and her proud pink breasts were heaving in time with her spasms of horror.

Like many examples in the realm of exploitation cinema, the title "Handmaidens of the Monster" is pretty much irrelevant to the story contents, but who's complaining? And considering the B-movie industry perspective of the plot it actually seems appropriate.

In addition to cheap gin and sex, Diabolism, Black Magic and Voodoo often featured prominently in the pulps. Cases in point: Richard Shaw's "Black Chapel," Art Crockett's "Vengeance of the Devil's Mistress" ("Using her lovely body, she taunted him to do the Devil's work!") and Larry Dickson's "In the Name of Terror" ("Even now parts of the Earth are ruled by Black Magic!"). Other stories in the same issue included the cool-named F.X. Fallon's "Evil Stalks the Night," "Soft Brides for the Damned," plus a pair of ostensible zombie tales, Harvey Berg's "The Crypt Speaks!" ("The dead walk among the living!") and Jim Arthur's vaguely familiar "Night of the Walking Dead" (six years before George Romero's NIGHT OF THE

LIVING DEAD, 1968). Discreet descriptions of women's bustlines frequently punctuated nearly every story (i.e., "her jutting breasts," "their breasts heaved with excitement and desire," "firm upthrust breasts pressing into my shoulder," etc.).

The prolific Bill Ryder's 25-page novelette "Satan's Ballet" ("The lovely young maidens would suffer the tortures of the damned!"), centered around mad composer/choreographer Antoine Duval and his infernal dance masterpiece.

The scenes which flashed on the screen were hideous to behold. The pictures had been taken in full color. They represented the wanton gyrations of beautiful women whose nearly naked bodies twisted and turned in the desire of the damned. As the scene shifted, sinister male imps appeared, their faces masked, their grotesque bodies covered with skintight red suits ... The rhythms of the dance were almost non-existent. There was no beauty – only the depraved motions of tormented beings seeking release for their twisted and demented emotions. Throughout it all, the sound track gave off a mixture of drum beats, screeching violins, moans, shrieks and sobs ... Seeing the foul shapes disporting themselves before her, Mercedes felt a sickness churning within her.

Later, heroine Mercedes St. Claire learns that the choreography is all too real:

Roughly she was lowered onto the rough stone flooring. The visions of imps and demons swirled around her. Once again she found herself refusing to believe the reality of the scene. This was some mad joke. The whole thing was designed to lend a sense of authenticity to Duval's Mephisto Ballet ... The fiends were binding her arms behind her. She could feel the hard knobs digging into her wrists. She could feel her body being dragged across the dais. Her ankles were being forced apart and spread-eagled to twin rings on the floor. Through dazed eyes she saw the pitchfork coming at her. Its prongs caught in the bodice of her dress, ripping the cloth from her trembling bosom. Even the imps paused in their Satanic mischief long enough to savor the trapped beauty of their victim as Mercedes writhed in her bonds ... Other hands reached for her. She shrank against the cold stone. But they sought her out, clawing the bra from her. Now her nylon briefs were being tugged down her flanks. The burning brimstone stung her naked flesh ... Gretchen's hands had already been bound and she was powerless to protect herself from the vicious jabs of the pitchforks. Her dress was ripped in a hundred places, and her healthy young body showed through. Gretchen thrashed futilely as she was placed beside Mercedes and shackled to the dais. Both girls screamed their horror as the demons stripped Gretchen's clothes from her.

Another nude woman is sacrificed on an altar, and even outright demonfucking rears its horny horned head ("...there was no mistaking the sensuous undulation of their unfettered hips. A demon reached for one. A woman's shrill laugh answered his move. The demon and the woman clutched onto each other in a frenzied dance of unholy desire"). Many of the stories were too crudely written to register as anything more than high camp. "Satan's Ballet" actually transcends camp with its colorful depiction of ever-escalating demonic dementia.

An apparent rival of SHOCK MYSTERY TALES was WEB TERROR STORIES, another bi-monthly digest which oozed out of the Candar Publishing Company in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

WEB #3 (Vol.4, November 1963) tackled the ever-topical theme of Devil worship. Harold Smithson's "The Fanatic Justice of Satan's Cult" ("Who would be chosen for the altar of agony?") took place in plague-infested Europe (Medieval Italy?). It boasted a frenetic witches' sabbath overseen by the demoniacal Black Man in a goat's head mask. An old crone, Mother Evva, gets her heart carved out, and a virgin ("... a young girl of perhaps sixteen") is sacrificed amidst much communal flagellation and drunken revelry. Other tales were "Act of Horror" ("Hurry, hurry – To the ghastliest show on Earth!"), "The Seventh Veil" ("Behind the veil lurked a Hour straight from Hell!"), and "Torture Chains of Vengeance" ("What is the fury of a she-fiend scorned?!"). "Hands of Pain," meanwhile, starred notorious 15th century bitchqueen Magdalena Borgia ("A thin stream of spittle ran down from the side of her mouth to fall on one of her breasts").

WEB TERROR STORIES (Vol.4, #1, August 1962) deviated from its usual itinerary of shock-horror tales and ran a bona fide pulp sci-fi yarn, Arthur P. Gordon's "Orbit of the Pain-Masters." Here we learn that alien abduction of human beings (and especially female human beings) for experimental purposes was a far from novel phenomenon, harkening back to the earliest days of trash SF. A terrestrial temptress named Linda Carter (!!) is made captive by seven little green extraterrestrials known as the "Gl'en" ("Singular: Gl'a"), led by Ftzi, Dvo and Rahot. The results sound like a rejected script for Whitley Streiber's COMMUNION II.

"Monsters! Stop! For God's sake, you can't ... I'm dying, you're killing me!" She jerked against the clamps which held her, but they only sawed into her flesh, making more pain to add to her torture. In a haze, she saw the green beings standing, regarding her, the Gl'en who were her torturers. She shrieked at them, cursing them and pleading by turns. But still the pain went on ... Fifty miles up, entirely invisible from the ground, Linda screamed, fainting, was revived again as the green beings used their electric clips on her tautened nude body, and then slowly began with other things. There was a paste that had no effect at all, another that burned her so terribly, all over her naked flesh, that she shrieked long after it had been removed. She fainted again and again, and was revived to suffer more in this hell...but, at last, she could not easily be revived, and the green beings consulted with one another and decided to allow her a brief rest from their "experiments."

Sometimes, rather than merely being the monster's victim, the babe was the beast. Published in the same issue of WEB TERROR STORIES, "My Love, The Monster!" was an early short work by John Jakes (future author of the '70s "Brak, The Barbarian" paperbacks and THE BAS-TARD miniseries saga). A spot illustration depicted a bodacious leopard-spotted catwoman, probably because the anonymous artist figured it'd be a lot sexier than the repulsive lizardchick described by Jakes' actual prose. A contents page teaser blurb proclaimed, "My sweetheart feeds on flesh!" Despite its title, for a change the story accented gory horror over sex. The bustaceous she-creature turns out to be none other than the hero's sexy girlfriend, Laura, who is left a patchwork quilt of various animal species thanks to mad plastic surgeon Dr. Sidney Poe (!) and his skin-grafting experiments.

Unexpected potential rubber fetishism popped up in R. Duncan MacVee's "The Horror Room" (Vol.4, #5, August 1964). Set in 1889 London at Madame LeGrand's Wax Museum, a Satanic killer has been committing murders while disguised as a waxen mannequin, an illusion accomplished by wearing a full latex body stocking. His female aide also wears rubber ("...dressed in black latex which fitted over her body like a second skin, leaving only her white, white face exposed"). The killers, including Iris the Rubber Maid, then proceed to tie up and torture the hero for a refreshing change of pace ("They had already divested me of my apparel. My flesh was vulnerable and exposed to their fiendish inventiveness"). As it is related in the first person – a popular pulp ploy – this endows the leading man with a distinct macho/masochistic undertow. Strangely, the word "bugger" is allowed, while "damned" is censored ("D—d") within the text. Phraseology such as "Goddamn!" and "Chrissakes!" was not uncommon in other stories. Also in the issue was yet another dominatrix, Yancey Robillard's "Mistress of the Steel Masque" ("Was she only a helpless female in mail clothing, or Abu's dark angel of vengeance?" and "Isle of the Damned").

"Jaws of Doom" by Harley Bursick contained a scurvy sea salt in Polynesia hunting for rare pink pearls who instead finds a monstrous man-eating shark, and a man-eater of a different kind, Mamui the dusky island gal ("... a velvet-eyed beauty who switched her hips coquettishly ..."). Central character was Perrot, the villainous clam pirate:

At his rough hands, the uninhibited, willing girls of the island learned the hitherto-unknown horrors of rape ... One defiant young beauty was trussed up with a harsh hemp rope which bit into the tender brown flesh left exposed by her sarong. Swinging her from the top of a palm tree which reached out over the lagoon, he loudly invited the shark to pluck the overhanging fruit with his razor-sharp teeth.

WEB TERROR STORIES often resorted to fabulous exotic locales in

which to place their action. Pre-Hispanic America for "The Aztec Pain-Princess." Ancient Rome for "Chains of the Conqueror" ("He would tame the she-beasts..."). China for "Ling-Tsu's Experiments in Fear." Arabia for "Hell's Harem." Egypt for "Terror Slaves of the Nile." The latter cover story featured a pot-bellied troll with fangs and claws menacing a beautiful Queen Cleopatra lookalike. Emory Connor's "Mistress of the Six Gates of Horror" (Vol.4, #4, April 1964) takes place in 1900 Peking, and tells a sensitive story of the dowager Empress Tzu Hsi, aka The Black Dragon Woman, who feeds round-eyed babes to giant rats with the help of her bald Mongolian giant, Li Chiau. The hero's name is Paxton. It is highly possible that some of WEB's Middle and Far Eastern yarns were reprints from the "Yellow Peril" pulp hysteria of the '30s.

Michael Beloit's "Doctor Fang's Garden of Pain" (Vol.5, #2, June 1965) was based in 19th century Kyoto, Japan. Looney toons horticulturist Dr. Basho Fang Matsuro cultivates a fabulous garden, the centerpiece of which is a monstrous purple-flowered plant. His lovely daughter Machiko is revealed to be the unnaturally fostered offspring of the mobile killer plant. Clearly a blatant reworking of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Rappaccini's Daughter" (adapted in **TWICE-TOLD TALES**, 1962, D: Sidney Salkow), the yarn also borrowed from Corman's **THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** (1961) with its bit about human faces blooming on the plant's flowers.

Other tales were Mark Bergstrom's "Night of the Huntress" ("She killed the baron, and she was a bronze statue!") and Eric Ashby's "Venus of the Claws" ("... tradition doomed Katherine to a ghastly fate among the spider crabs").

Later issues of WEB dwelt gleefully on overtly Sadean angles. In Giles Hazel's "Mistress of Horror Castle," vicious Baroness Rabelan – obviously based upon the legend of Countess Elizabeth Bathory – drew the life's blood from muscular youths and plump teenage girls. Studded leather gauntlets spank trembling buttocks and boys are whipped, all overseen by the Baroness of Bitchdom from her Dark Room Throne ("What strange compulsion drove her to crush a whole village under her iron boot?"). Occasionally there were more traditional tales like noted SF writer Marion

Zimmer Bradley's "Treason of the Blood" ("Count Fioresi's word was that of a vampire"). But sado-masochism, bondage, extreme torture, humiliation and degradation seemed to be replacing good old-fashioned monster kicks and regular sex kinks. More human but inhumane monsters gained in prominence (typical stories were Leslie Manette's "The Girl in the Iron Collar," in which "A feminist learns the facts of life"; or Lawrence Frey's "Help Wanted – Female": "No experience required – and no hope expected"). Interestingly, this infatuation with more mundane mean-spiritedness gained momentum at the beginning of the American "roughie" nudie film cycle of the 1960s.

As a whole, nowadays the pulps seem to have gone the same way as the drive-in theaters and those wonderfully lurid newspaper movie ads that pretty much died out in the late '70s. Since the social constraints once applied to trash publishing have largely disappeared, an "anything goes" climate now exists, despite the ongoing efforts of the Politically Correct to stamp any aberrations out. In a time in which the most graphic forms of porn cater to the most jaded of appetites, there seems to be little room left for the blissful naivete of the pulps. The reason the pulps were so much more potent was because they tested the envelope of mainstream acceptability.

Now monsters can screw girls in you-are-there gynecological clarity. Japanese anime like **UROTSUKIDOJI** ("Wandering Kid" (1989, D: Hideki Takayama)) now depicts every depraved nuance of "girl-meets-monster" encounters. Although XXXplicit might well have its place, somewhere along the line a lot of the good filthy fun got lost.

Steve Fentone is known to fandom as the "Madman of Toronto," and the foremost authority on Mexican monster movies. Steve was the former editor of **KILLBABY** and currently publishes the life-affirming film-bible **TAME**. Send \$6.00 for the latest issue: PO Box 742, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2N5 CANADA.

HANDMAIDENS OF THE MONSTER



HIS FIENDISH EXPERIMENTS WERE TAKEN FROM SATAN'S BLACK BOOK

IF YOU DARE...

**TURN THE
PAGE AND GET
AN EYEFUL OF
AWFUL**



... DR. ORLOF, THAT IS!

MORPHO DARLING

**M:I goes
to the
MOVIES**

By Timothy Paxton
with Betsy Burger & David Todarello

Sex and monsters – what an irresistible combination! What's considered commonplace in today's horror productions – nudity intertwined with gore – was something studios wouldn't (or couldn't) dare attempt thirty-plus years ago. While it's true that there was an underlying sexual tension to Hollywood's movie monsters' "relationship" with their leading ladies, these passions were never consummated. It wasn't until the late 50s that this tradition of cinematic dry-humping came to a climax with the introduction of outright nudity. Through the breakthrough efforts of arthouse auteurs such as Roger Vadim and his star Brigitte Bardot, among others, audiences on both continents were prepared for the next phase, and the industry's exploitation exponents were only too willing to oblige.

The European and American approaches to making this new type of film were markedly different, American nudie cuties (designed for adult male entertainment, not thought provocation) were light-headed, whimsical and stuffed-to-the-gills with bouncing breasts and jiggling bottoms. Horror clichés were grafted onto these bawdy, slap and tickle features. These misplaced elements served more as comedy props than mood or atmosphere enhancers, where American filmmakers missed the boat in attempting to blend the sensual and the surreal, the Europeans excelled.

Sadly, thanks to U.S. censors, other well-known Euro-Erotic-tinged horror films were released here sans various "improper" scenes of sexual improprieties (lesbian references, nudity, striptease sequences and so forth). A broader release guaranteed larger box office receipts, so integrity be damned.

Possibly the best example of the European sex and monster film comes from a director who has had his hand in the proverbial honey pot for over thirty years: Jesus Franco. Despite heavy criticism from many in the cinematic circle, his films reflect a man obsessed with the dark details of the human condition. He especially delights in those desires which entangle scientific experimentation with eroticism. In one of Franco's earliest works, **GRITOS EN LA NOCHE/THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** (1961), the seed for the creature feature-cum-sexy shocker genre was planted. Having seen this film, along with others made during his early career (notably, **MISS MUERTE/THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z**, 1965), a serious chronicler of Franco's product, and erotic horror altogether, can understand why his later projects, excessive as they had become, succeeded in delivering the explicit goods. No one can deny that his 70s efforts **LA COMTESSE NOIRE/LOVES OF IRINA** (1973), **CHRISTINA PRINCESSE DE L'ÉROTISME/VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD** (1971, the uncut edition), and **VAMPYROS LESBOS-ERBIN DES DRACULA** ("The Lesbian Vampires—Heir-

esses of Dracula" (1970) are, without a doubt, the best erotic horror could ever hope to offer. They present the subject in a deliciously raw form, yet are embodied with a sense of wonder and beauty. By watching **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** the viewer can be a witness to the very beginnings of Franco's erotic mythos.

The English-language export of the film was believed lost until Mike Vraney of Something Weird Video and American director Frank Hennenlotter (**BASKET CASE**, 1982; **FRANKENHOOKER**, 1990; **BRAND DAMAGE**, 1988) discovered a copy in a derelict warehouse. After months of preparation, the release of this "Sexy Shock" in 1993 is without a doubt the most important find in the English-speaking world of erotic horror and monsterdom (even more so than the rediscovery of Fritz Böttger's 1959 classic **EIN TOTER HING IM NETZ/HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND**). It's well known that Franco didn't come up with the surgical-horror element which he has so often exploited. Rather, Georges Franju's marvelous **LES YEUX SANS VISAGE/EYES WITHOUT A FACE** (1959) was primary in depicting very graphic facial reconstruction scenes. This said, Franco took the theme and made it his own, adding an *exploitive* eroticism (nudity and a salivating monster).

The film opens: it is a damp summer night in the Hartog region circa 1912, and a young woman stumbles drunkenly down a dimly lit alley to her apartment. She fumbles with the lock on the door, enters, and begins to undress. Suddenly, from her bedroom wardrobe a tall man with bulging dead eyes emerges and attacks her. She screams and the intruder jerks towards her like some sort of automaton. He strikes, grabbing the struggling woman, and biting her on the neck. Abruptly her screams cease. The monster picks up his lifeless prize and hurries out of the building. Once outside, the tapping of a gentleman's cane guides the *blind* creature and his spoils down a dark alley. The girl is never to be seen again. She is the fifth victim of the mad Dr. Orlof (Howard Vernon) and his robotic assistant, Morpho Lautner (Ricardo Valle).

The police are justifiably baffled by the mysterious disappearances, and the case is handed over to the befuddled detective Edger Tanner (Conrado San Martín). While he puzzles over the lack of clues, another woman is about to be abducted. At a local burlesque club, Dr. Orlof captures the attention of a voluptuous singer, Dany (María Silva). "I'm fascinated by your flesh," Orlof whispers as he strokes her cheek, "So soft and fresh. So smooth..." He adorns her with a jewel-encrusted necklace and offers her a ride home to his chateau (an abandoned mansion) for a nightcap and some hanky-panky. The carriage arrives at its destination and Orlof lets

the woman run into the house, locking the door behind her. Once inside Morpho brutally hunts her down — chasing the hysterical woman from room to room and using the shrieks to guide him to his prey. He violently pins the struggling beauty against a wall and savagely rips into her tender, exposed throat. Another fresh corpse is ready for Orlof's vile experiments. This ferocious prelude sets the tone for the remainder of the production.

Dr. Orlof was once a mild-mannered prison surgeon who fell in love with Arnes (the stunning Perla Cristal), a female prisoner in his care. Faking her death by inducing insulin shock, he smuggled her out of prison and made her his lover and assistant. Realizing that he may need muscle for some of his latter forays into experimentation, Orlof also wrote a death certificate for Morpho, a psychotic murderer who was scheduled for execution. After a little selective surgery Morpho is transformed into an obedient robot whose heightened sense of hearing more than makes up for his grotesque blindness. When Orlof's young daughter Melissa (seductive Diana Lorys under make-up) is scarred in a fire and goes into a coma, the scientist sets off on a mission of surgical madness.

But why does Orlof hunt beautiful, lustful young tarts? The reason is very simple: they are plentiful in the burlesque district, and who would miss one or two of the wanton females anyway? Besides, the kidnapped women also happen to look a lot like Orlof's daughter. This fact drives the scientist to use the skin and flesh of the recently murdered women in a vain attempt to surgically reconstruct the disfigured face of his beloved Melissa (who lies comatose in a glass tomb in her father's crypt-cum-laboratory). Aided by Arnes, each attempt to restore Melissa's former beauty and consciousness is met with disaster: the young woman gurgles into consciousness and then collapses, ugly as ever, as her body rejects the transplants.

Detective Tanner is still puzzling over the case, and it seems that the only person with a clue is his girlfriend Wanda Bronsky (Lorys, out of make-up), who, by the way, is a shapely singer/ballet dancer and a dead ringer for Orlof's Melissa. Meanwhile, Orlof decides that the operations are a failure because he uses dead tissue, and the hunt is on for living flesh. Orlof, dressed in his fetching top hat, cape, and cane get-up, attempts to lure Wanda into his clutches. She spots him and dodges the madman. Not to be disappointed, Orlof then surprises another sexy nightclub singer, killing her piano partner in the process. Morpho attacks the blonde, and almost kills her in his frenzy. The monster



Suddenly, Dany (María Silva) realizes she's all alone in an empty house with a monster...

reluctantly gives up his prize, and the woman's face is unmarred by the attack. A smile creases Orlof's naturally dour expression; now that he has a live woman, he can successfully restore Melissa.

The duo cart the woman back to the lab, and Orlof prepares her for surgery. He picks up a scalpel and (in a beautifully tracked shot), guides the blade towards the prone woman. Orlof doesn't hesitate to guide the blade down the side of her face, past the nape of her neck, and between the cleavage of her firm breasts (incidentally, this scene was cut from the US release, but remains intact in the French edition¹). The operation is another failure, but Orlof decides to keep the barely conscious woman as his prisoner. "We'll keep her alive," Orlof sneers to Arnes, "we may have need of her later." Why he may need her is not expanded upon, but Morpho doesn't seem too unhappy about the decision.

With the scientist's latest obsession, Wanda, fresh on his mind, Orlof continually talks about future operations. This discussion leads to tension between Orlof and Arnes, and there's an altercation in the lab.

Sick of all the killings, Arnes refuses to help Orlof any further, and threatens to expose him to the police if he doesn't cease his research. The choice between his work and the woman isn't a tough one for the scientist, and Orlof kills her. As Orlof examines the dead Arnes, Morpho, perhaps hearing the two argue, stumbles into the room moaning. Arnes lays the body just a few feet away and Orlof has to think fast. Orlof speaks in a soft, drippy tone to his assistant, telling him about the next hunt. Morpho listens to his master's carnal plans, and the distraction is complete. The monster wanders away, and the scientist prepares for the final operation...

To help her boyfriend with the investigation, Wanda gathers evidence on her own, and decides to trap the killer herself. The discovery of Dany's necklace near Orlof's hideaway prompts Tanner into action. While Tanner methodically tracks Orlof, Wanda manages to get intentionally picked up by the madman at a local club. Orlof knocks Wanda out with a drug and takes the woman home to prepare her for the ultimate experiment. Meanwhile, as Orlof readies the

chemicals and machines, Wanda manages to escape from her room. She wanders through the house and discovers the mutilated (and quite alive) victim #7. Naturally she screams, and this attracts Morpho's keen attention. What follows is a wild chase through the house where the blind man eventually corners her in Orlof's lab. However, before any surgery can commence, Morpho discovers the dead body of Arnes unceremoniously stuffed in a closet in the lab. Whimpering in grief, the bug-eyed creature attacks and murders his benefactor. The struggle between man and monster interrupts the delicate experiment in progress and Melissa spasms and dies. Morpho then scoops up the unconscious Wanda and takes her to the roof of the building (all monsters have an instinctive urge to do this sort of thing). Tanner and a fellow detective arrive on the scene just in time to shoot Morpho. The monster drops Wanda, stumbles about and, after being shot twice more, falls from the roof to his death. The two lovers are reunited.

The lack of actual nude scenes in the US production doesn't hinder the total sexuality of the picture as a whole; there are enough randy



OUCH! The fiendish shape known as Morpho (Ricardo Valle) gives Dany the fatal hickey from Hell!

goings-on to definitely tag this as a sexy shocker. Morpho's attack on the women borders on a sexual frenzy, and each encounter is a psychotic's attempt to rape and devour his victim. Framing these scenes is Franco's keen use of cinematography — swooping shots, odd angles, and deep shadows — accompanied by a jittery organ, pipe, and xylophone soundtrack supplied by J. Pagán, A. Ramírez, and the director himself. This clamor is very effective, and at time acts as "Morpho's theme," highlighting the creature's tracking the smell of female. Odd whistles and squeals punctuate the grotesque close-ups of the pasty-faced Morpho captured in the elation of the hunt.

The director's use of various sexual juxtapositions within the film is fresh and a little deviant. Even though Orloff is able to channel Morpho's psychotic urges into stalking women, the creature has a need for human kindness, which, oddly, comes in the form of a cuddle from Arnes. One touching scene occurs after Morpho pursues and subdues victim #6. The blind man is exhausted and collapses on his bed. Arnes enters his room to comfort him, whereupon Morpho

moans pitifully. "He's been mistreating you, Morpho," she says taking the misshapen monster in her arms and stroking his jet black hair. "I know you're afraid, but you must not be. He is just a man. A man who will die someday like all mortals." Orloff has command over Arnes ("I own you!"), and uses her as his assistant. Orloff loves his oblivious daughter, Morpho loves Arnes, and the woman comforts both men... it's a bizarre arrangement. The monster has deep feelings about his victims as well. After knocking Wanda out with chloroform, Orloff instructs Morpho to take her to Melissa's room for safekeeping. There Morpho sits on the bed next to the unconscious girl, his hands running up and down her supple body. Perhaps he is building an image of her in his mind for various perverted reasons, or maybe he is realizing how closely she resembles Melissa. Whatever the reason, this scene goes on uncomfortably long, and Franco plays it for all its creepiness. When Wanda later attempts to escape, Morpho chases her down and subdues her in Orloff's lab; his hands are constantly all over her breasts and body.

While the dance numbers lack the overtly erotic air of later Franco works² there are still enough scantily dressed females in the nightclub scenes to keep any pervert happy. Although the film is based on the (no doubt nonexistent) "novel" by Franco (under his pseudonym David Kuhne), it is heavily influenced by mystery author Edgar Wallace. The name "Orloff" — this time with two "f's" — comes from a character in the 1940 Walter Summers British production of Wallace's "The Testament of Gordon Stuart," **THE DARK EYES OF LONDON/ THE HUMAN MONSTER**. This Dr. Orloff (played by Bela Lugosi) also employs a blind giant to kill his victims as part of an insurance scam (this film was later remade in 1961 by Alfred Vohrer as **DIE TOTEN AUGEN VON LONDON/ THE DEAD EYES OF LONDON**). So enamored with the character and his mystique, Franco has "Orloff" appear in many of his later productions even if only by name: **THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z, EL SECRETO DEL DOCTOR ORLOFF/DR. ORLOFF'S MONSTER** (1963), **THE LOVES OF IRINA, LA VENGANZA DEL DOCTOR MABUSE** "The Vengeance of Doctor Mabuse"

(1970), **EL HUNDIMIENTO DE LAS CASA USHER/REVENGE IN THE HOUSE OF USHER** (1983), **LES PRÉDATEURS DE LA NUIT/FACELESS** (1988, with Howard Vernon in cameo!) and so forth.

Howard Vernon stars as Dr. Orlof, and, since that time, has been a frequent Franco attraction. His appearances have been varied: Dracula in **DRÁCULA CONTRA FRANKENSTEIN/THE SCREAMING DEAD** (1971), the vicious Count Zaroff in **LA COMTESSE PERVERSE** ("The Perverted Countess" (1973), and the confused Dr. Usher in **REVENGE IN THE HOUSE OF USHER**, to name but a few. Anyone interested in Vernon's work (and Franco for that matter) should read the interview with the actor in the book **OBSESSION - THE FILMS OF JESS FRANCO** published by Selbstverlag Frank Trebbin, Germany (also available from co-editor/author Tim Lucas of **VIDEO WATCHDOG** magazine), and in **EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA** number five.

One wonders why **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** wasn't hailed as a triumph of horror upon its initial release. There are three possible reasons. One, the film is a horror story and features a monster and screaming women — elements usually considered too exploitative and therefore seen as "bad taste" by critics. Second, in the U.S., most foreign films are seen as too highbrow or too clumsy to sell a lot of tickets. This is true even today when foreign productions are relegated to the limited arthouse circuit or direct-to-video release. The final reason is that the film probably wasn't distributed too well. Taking the first two reasons into account, **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** played a few second bills and then disappeared, with limited TV runs until the mid-70s. However, now that the film has been given a second chance (and maybe even a third if Franco has his way), it can be seen as the masterpiece it is.

As an annotation to this review, Franco's **REVENGE IN THE HOUSE OF USHER** is a

moody quasi-sequel to **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** featuring an aging and confused Orlof and an equally long-in-the-tooth (and very talkative) Morpho. In a slightly altered flashback, Orlof leaves Hartog with Morpho and Melissa when his experimentation gains the attention of the local law. Stealing away to a lonely castle in the French Alps, the doctor is able to restore Melissa's face, although she remains comatose! Despite a series of half-successful blood transfusions from Orlof's personal kennel of chained peasant women, it's Morpho's dedication to Melissa which finally brings her back to the land of the living ... just in time for the roof of the crypt to collapse on the cringing couple. The film is full of potential, but lacks definition of plot and character. The flashback scenes look as if they were struck from a master negative, and the rumors that Franco was shopping around for a 1993 re-release of **THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF** only makes one's mouth water. It's a pity no one has the nerve to put the film out — uncut, subtitled, and widescreen — on laserdisc³.



The awful Dr. Orlof (Howard Vernon) orders Morpho to dispose of another heavenly body...

FOOTNOTES:

1. It's a common practice worldwide to release alternate versions of "finished" films; there is a domestic version, which is then edited and reconstructed for export. There is another excised nude sequence, this time with Morpho and Wanda. During the final chase through Orlof's home, Morpho uncovers Wanda's ample bosom (or, to be more specific, a body-double, since Lorys reportedly didn't want to expose herself).

2. In the American export variation of **MISS MUERTE** (the only version of this film available) the near-nudity of actress Estella Blain and her full-body fish net "Miss Muertes" costume still takes the breath away. In his **VAMPYROS LESBOS**, the sad-eyed Soledad Miranada has a bizarre sexual stage act with live actors and mannequins.

3. However, there is a beautiful print available from Redemption Video. Their English-dubbed release of the film is letterboxed.

CREDITS:**GRITOS EN LA NOCHE**

[*"Cries in the Night"*] *French t-* L'HORRIBLE DOCTEUR ORLOF [*The Horrible Doctor Orlof*]. *US t-* THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF. Spain/France, 1961. *p co-* Hispamer (Madrid)/Eurociné (Paris). *d-* Jeff Franco [= Jesús Franco]. *sc-* Jesús Franco, based on a novel by David Khunne [= Jesús Franco]. *ph-* Godofredo Pacheco. *as ph-* Javier Pérez Zofio. *art d-* Antonio Simot. *ed-* Alfonso Santacana. *m-* J. Pagán, A. Ramírez Angel. *ad m-* Jesús Franco. *c-* María del Carmen Martínez Román. *as d-* Alfredo Hurtado. *p-* Sergio Newman (Spain) and Marius Lesœur [= Leo Lax] (France). *cast-* Howard Vernon, Sam Martin [=Conrado San Martín], Diana Lorys, Perla Cristal, Mary Silvers [=María Silva], Richard Valley [=Ricardo Valle], Mara Lasso, Venancio Muro, Félix Dafauce, Faustino Cornejo, Manuel Vázquez, Juan A. Riquelme, Elena María Tejeiro, Jesús Franco (night club pianist). Widescreen. B&W. *rt-* 95 min (Spain), 90 min (France), 88 min (US).



Dr. Orlof assures Morpho that their nightly stalkings will continue until they find the right woman... for the final, fiendish experiment!

SHE WANTS YOU

STORY AND
ART BY
GARY DUMM
JOE ZABEL

...DID I TELL YA SHE'S T'DIE FOR, OR WHAT, BOB?

OH, YEH,
BABY.
LOOK AT
THEM
MELONS!

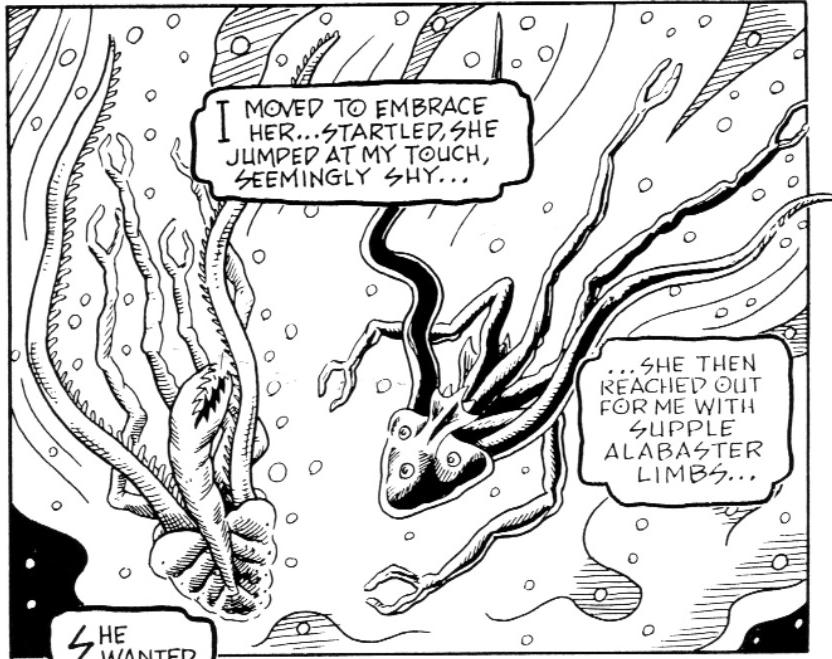
HE WRITHED IN THAT PRIMORDIAL DANCE, HER LARGE AND PERKY FLOATATION BLADDERS BOBBING UP AND DOWN, HYPNOTIZING ME...

...A GODDESS!

GLIDING EFFORTLESSLY, UNDULATING THROUGH THE PURPLE METHANE SEA, HER VOLUPTUOUS BODY ENTICED...OUR EYES MET, AND FOR AN ETERNAL NANO-SECOND, LOCKED. ...I WANTED HER, BADLY!

HE HAD A BROAD, BEAUTIFULLY HARD-ENED VENTRAL CARAPACE...THE KIND ANY MALE COULD GO FOR.

I BEGAN MY COURTSHIP DISPLAY...





HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN

The concept of combining sex and horror is an old one, but even worn ideas can be reworked for new means of expression. In the 60s the American nudie genre was ripe for experimentation, and smart directors would do whatever was necessary to keep their films from being dull while remaining within ridiculously low budgets. Directors realized that monsters were fun for folks of all ages, and a new breed of nudie was born ... and since nudies were intended for adults only, anything could go. The injection of monsters into the nudist camp and nudie-cutie films was inevitable. This bizarre touch would punch up some much needed excitement and humor which, sadly, a good many of the "adult features" of the day lacked.

Until recently, only a few of these films were available for the general video-buying film collector. Thanks to Something Weird Video these long lost classics of a bygone age are once again seeing the light of day. What's nice about so many of these films turning up now is that they can be appreciated for what they were at best: silly, creative, light entertainment.

HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN was released in 1962, and it was the first genuine monster nudie, and an energetic one at that. While it was more spirited than it was well executed, it is not dull, and features a party scene that outclasses every hippie film that came after it.

Lovable Bob Cresse plays Granny Good, a screwball old woman modeled after (or, more accurately, stolen from) Jonathan Winters's character Maude Frickert. Her boarding school, Granny Good's School For Good Girls, is an old mansion on a hill filled with young women who are comfortable running around topless or in their underwear. The film starts with Granny behind jail bars, telling her story. One day, she is visited by the parents of a new student named Prudence Bumgartner whom we later learn is a spy for the sheriff.

Despite the circumstances that brought Prudence to the school, she is as comfortable topless as anyone else, and we are treated to a lengthy scene of several of the students showering and undressing for bed. Prudence's roommate Sally (whom, we are informed both visually and verbally, holds the world record for showers in a day) tells Prudence that the girls are sometimes afraid at the school. As the girls try to sleep we hear the howling of a wolf. It turns out there is indeed a wolfman at the school. His name is Krakow and he works in Granny's basement, where she is busy making moonshine. The old lady scolds the 7-foot beast for going out at night and frightening the girls.

The next day, Granny teaches several classes to the young students. First, they do exercises, breasts a-bouncin', in red t-shirts and short shorts. They eventually complain about the heat and do the rest of their exercises topless. Granny

exercises with them, tripping over her jump rope as the students show perfect grace. Next on the curriculum is art class. The naked students draw Granny, the fully clothed model, as she strikes some unique poses. The drawings are ridiculously bad, and many are hilarious. The class is followed by a recess in which the girls sunbathe topless.

The day-in-progress offers the opportunity for plenty of jokes. Most of them are bad puns, but to the filmmakers' credit, they are plentiful. Typical commentary describes one large-breasted student who is "only twelve years old but took a lot of vitamins." Another student is "on a football scholarship. She made the grade at Vanderbilt but was thrown out of the shower." The jokes (especially the one involving a girl reading a dictionary from cover to cover) occasionally attempt to be literate and educated. What a concept!

That evening, the students prepare for the costume ball. Several of them sneak out of the shower to phone their boyfriends, who will spike the punch. Sure enough, when the party starts, all sorts of wild things happen. Among the attendees are Dracula, someone in a Frankenstein mask, the Phantom of the Opera, and a second werewolf. As the party progresses, Granny notes that Prudence "[doesn't] seem to mix with the other girls." Sure enough, she sneaks into the basement and finds the hooch. Luckily for Granny, Krakow catches Prudence, who passes out at the sight of him.

Back at the party, not only do we get to see topless students dancing with Frankenstein and the Phantom, but one student designs her own costume with a missing backside and everyone guzzles the punch. It's a rollicking good time, which probably gave a few film-going frat boys ideas for parties at their own colleges. Downstairs, the cops show up to arrest Granny. She tells them she's only making "elderberry wine" and when they all taste the potent mixture they pass out. As Granny walks away, seemingly scot-free, she is arrested for "underpaying a werewolf."

In the end, Granny prevails. She wasn't behind jail bars at all, but on the outside, watching her new workers, Prudence and the cops, preparing her next shipment of moonshine.

HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN is a good introduction to the world of the monster nudie. It succeeds because of its irreverence. Even though the jokes don't always work, the pace is reasonably quick and you've got to love a film where Frankenstein does the twist. Music is often used for comedic effect, and the naked bodies are plentiful—though it's hard to figure why they included one lingering shot of a wrinkled butt in the shower. - Aaron Milenski

US, 1962. DIRECTOR- R. L. FROST.
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

SEXY PROIBITISSIMO

European filmmakers occasionally dipped into "low-class" combinations of monsters and nudity, as evidenced by 1963's **SEXY PROIBITISSIMO**. It's not exactly a shocker, but does qualify as a monster movie, as it has appearances from Dracula, Frankenstein, and a few space creatures. It also features "18 of Italy's sexiest, most gorgeous strippers," which by my standards is not an exaggeration (I am also of the school that the early 60s standard of beauty is far more accurate than today's). The film opens with a striptease in a nightclub, and we are treated to several shots of the same two or three audience members as well as some odd camera angles and tantalizing use of shadows.

After the credits, a narrator informs us that we will be witnessing famous stripteases through history, and seventeen vignettes follow, all of which are excuses to show us the aforementioned women. The narrator dryly throws in the occasional joke (e.g. "The modern government has found full employment for vampires in the federal tax bureau") but for the most part, the presentation of the historic events supply the film with its humor. Schoolkids would undoubtedly remember history much better if they were able to witness it in this fashion.

It seems apparent that **SEXY PROIBITISSIMO** was edited together from at least two projects. We are treated to a few modern stripteases acts without narration, including two women dancing and removing each other's clothes, and the aforementioned circle strip and pre-credits strip. A woman in a spider web bra strips in front of a huge web and in Hong Kong, a Japanese woman (Don't the film makers know where Hong Kong is?) does a combined "beauty and the beast" and "sacrifice of a virgin" dance, ravaging a wooden statue and prancing around like a Jules Pfeiffer's cartoon characters dancing for spring. All of these sequences are intercut with shots of audience members, implying that the scenes were part of a documentary on the art form. These scenes have many of the film's most beautiful women and more close-ups than the historic ones, so it's hardly worth complaining about lack of continuity.

The most fun sequences in the film are the three monster sequences. The world's first appearance of a vampire comes moments after the victim-to-be has a bad dream. (We see her writhing around on her bed uncontrollably and clutching her throat.) This particular Dracula has square fangs, but somehow the bite

HOLLYWOOD MODELS MEET THE MONSTERS!



SHOT IN
NUDERAMA

IN
SPINE TICKLING
COLOR

The BIGGEST BEVY OF BEAUTIES ever layed before your eyes!



SEXY PROIBITISSIMO: Beware the kiss of the spider woman! Imagine the sting from this tail!



marks are neat round holes. When Dr. Frankenstein first leaves his monster alone on the operating table, the resident nurse decides to practice her striptease act on the creature, who is not surprisingly excited enough to break through his straps and start his first rampage. This particular beast has a pasty face with grooved lips and random tufts of hair, an appropriately silly makeup job for a silly film. Probably the most entertaining scene of all is the final one, set several years in the future. A female space traveler finds herself on a planet full of creatures with wriggling red antennae (We don't know what the rest of their bodies look like since the antennae are all the film's budget could provide!). Of course she decides to strip to appease the monsters. Wouldn't you? As she strips, the film's jazz score is occasionally punctuated by ridiculous horror-movie-styled organ swells.

SEXY PROBITISSIMO certainly benefits from its European production. Despite the cheap monster makeup, the cheesy jazz, the fact that Cleopatra and the Hong Kong dancer look suspiciously Italian, and the silly commentary, it's more upscale than your typical nudie and (except for the Spider Woman) the women are classy and beautiful. There is no dialogue, but the narration and brevity of individual scenes keeps the film from being dull. The commentary is typically sexist ("It's hard to believe there was a time when women couldn't talk" and "Maybe space driving is easier for dizzy dames") but the men in the film are all ugly and lecherous, so perhaps the Italians got away with a biting comment about the type of person who watched this kind of thing. (What does that say about the modern day nudie historian?) It should be noted that not all of the women strip beyond the bikini stage and some of the bits are much better than others, but nevertheless **SEXY PROBITISSIMO** is an entertaining and occasionally arousing way to spend 64 minutes. - Aaron Milenski

ITALY, 1963. DIRECTOR- GINO MORIDINI.
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

KISS ME QUICK

Big-time nudie producer Harry Novak probably reached his peak with the legendary 1964 sci-fi/monster nudie **KISS ME QUICK** (which until recently was credited to Russ Meyer). Novak's films sport low budgets, but are of higher quality than most exploitation fare of the mid-60s. The production shows here with crisp photography (courtesy of Laszlo Kovacs, around the same time he did similarly excellent work in Ray Dennis Steckler's films) and the presence of a silly but witty script.

The film begins with spoken credits (in which we learn of characters with punny names like Hotty Totty, Boobra and GG String), climaxing with several sexy women moaning the film's title while we're treated to close-ups of their mouths. We then go to the planet Droopiter in the Buttless galaxy (believe it or

not folks, the entire film is full of puns like these.), where a failed citizen named Sterilox (a great Stan Laurel imitation by Fred Coe, even if he is shaped more like Oliver Hardy) is asked to go to Earth, where they have two sexes, not one. The folks on Droopiter believe that Sterilox can redeem himself if he brings back some women to become servants, so he sets off to find a "perfect specimen."

Luckily for him, he ends up in the lab of Dr. Breedlove (Jackie DeWitt), a mad doctor with the voice of Bela Lugosi, the uncontrollable strangling arm of Dr. Strangelove, one of the best cases of bed-head I've ever seen, and a white, lined face that looks like a 4-year-old's first makeup experiment. If that wasn't enough, Dr. Breedlove spouts out more one-liners and double-entendres than can be taken in one viewing of the film (a reason to BUY the videotape!). Sterilox arrives just in time for Breedlove to reprimand one of his creations, Kiss Me Quick, for using a pre-**BARBARELLA** (1968, D: Roger Vadim) "sex machine" while he isn't present. (There doesn't seem to be any danger to this — one may surmise that the good doctor didn't want to miss the show, which we are graciously treated to.) Kiss Me and two other beauties proceed to dance topless for Sterilox, and are briefly interrupted by the intrusion of one of Breedlove's "failed experiments," a Frankenstein monster (also played by Coe) called, not surprisingly, "Frankie Stein." The scene where Frankie dances with the women is almost as fun as the scene where the dancers try to outdo each other for the best backwards and sideways breast movement.

The majority of the movie consists of women dancing, weight-lifting, riding exercise bicycles, swinging on swings, etc. while Breedlove and Sterilox peek in and Breedlove cracks his jokes. There are occasional interruptions for brief appearances by Dracula and a mummy. One particularly fun scene has three of Breedlove's finest creations swimming nude in a rubber kids' pool, occasionally standing up while holding small gold beach balls to cover their crotches. Eventually, Sterilox decides he wants to bring a soda machine home with him but Breedlove convinces him to take a "specimen" instead.

KISS ME QUICK has aged surprisingly well. The jokes are just as likely to elicit a groan as a laugh, but they keep on coming at you and the two male leads are goofy and likeable. The women are exceptionally attractive, and Kovacs' photography shows them at their best. The endless scenes of exercising, rolling around and dancing are far less tedious to 90s eyes than the nude scenes in many films of the era. The makeup on the monsters is somewhat better than Breedlove's and they help keep the movie's momentum going. Backwards photography and other simple special effects are effectively used to comic result. **KISS ME QUICK** undeniably caters to the dumb male fantasies that brought people to the grindhouse in the 60s (after all, the sexy naked women are bred to become servants, and the film ends with Breedlove stamping seals of approval on the butts of women as they come through on a conveyor belt), but does so with a sense of humor about its subject and itself. The film starts with one of the women moaning "Hello lover, this is your fantasy film girl. I'd like you to sit back and enjoy my sexy fun fest." Fun and sexy it is.

As the 70s went along, the use of nudity in horror films continued to increase, and there was little necessity to add monsters to softcore productions. Some of the finest and most daring horror movies of the decade combined the two elements. The vampire films **THE LOVES OF IRINA** and **VAMPYRES** (1974, D: José Larraz) are two superior examples of horror films with strong sexual content. Admittedly, part of the fun of watching the monster nudies now is their status as products of their times. **KISS ME QUICK**, for example, wouldn't have been made the same way if it wasn't intended exclusively for "Adults Only" theaters that catered to men. Its absurd sexism is hopelessly out of date today, and seems wonderfully naive when compared to today's "erotic thrillers". - Aaron Milenski

US, 1964. DIRECTORS- PETE PERRY & MAX GARDENS.
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

THE MONSTER OF CAMP SUNSHINE

With credits for people named "Ferenc Leroget, Harrison Peebles, Deborah Spray, Sally Parfait, and Ron Cheney, Jr." you can tell that **THE MONSTER OF CAMP SUNSHINE** is no ordinary dumb nudie. Whoever director "Leroget" is, he (or she) certainly believes in the kitchen sink method of filmmaking, as **THE MONSTER OF CAMP SUNSHINE** doesn't waste any idea or any opportunity to send itself up. The humor is completely tongue-in-cheek; in fact, the production is presented as if it were a serious horror film.

It begins with the words "the motion picture that follows is a fable. In it there are many nudists but only one monster. In life, it is generally the other way around." Then the credits are presented over a montage of Monty Python-like animation including mice, crawling keys and gloves, and sexual references like men doing pushups and cannons pumping and blasting. The film is subtitled "Or: How I

"Learned To Stop Worrying And Love Nature" and is photographed and edited by "Motley Crue." Filmed in glorious black and white it is unspoiled by twenty-nine years of dust accumulation.

After some stock footage of New York City (every good campy movie worth its salt uses stock footage liberally), we are introduced to our narrator, Claire Conway, a New York model, and her roommate Marta, a nurse who works at a science research laboratory. Marta wakes up this particular day feeling funny (and asks Claire to turn off her "spooky" music), and the day does, indeed, start out poorly. Marta breaks a mirror and Claire is unexpectedly scratched by her cat. Marta leaves for her job, where she works with laboratory rats, "upsetting the delicate balance of nature." When she has her back turned, an unidentified chemical drips into the rat cage, and the rats jump all over Marta (A silent-movie-style credit reads "HELP!"), eventually forcing her to hang out of a window. In the meantime, Claire is deciding whether or not to model a new topless bathing suit. To the audience's delight, she later decides to do so.

After Marta's big fright, the two women decide to spend a relaxing weekend at Camp Sunshine, an upstate nudist camp. Flashbacks show us that Marta was a longtime nudist (who reads "Urban Nudist" magazine) and convinced Claire to become the free, open-minded person who would model a topless bathing suit without hang-ups. The camp (run by "Susannah York") is a lovely quiet place full of peace-loving nudists who dance through the meadow and a dim-witted gardener named Hugo who brandishes his clippers excitedly as he peeks at the regulars.

While the women are away, Marta's boss and good friend Harrison gets rid of the "vile, evil substance" by throwing the bottle into the Hudson. Unfortunately, a fisherman catches it (along with an inner tube and a hot water bottle) and foolishly lets it fall into the water near Camp Sunshine, where it breaks. Hugo, during a break from his job, tramps around in the water and drinks from the river, as frogs croak approvingly.

Soon enough, Hugo begins to resemble a hairy, fat Moe Howard with a pasty face and an ape walk, and starts to run around the camp with an axe. He goes after one skinny dipper and steps in a bear trap, his noises causing

Susannah to shout "Mah bruthuh's a monstuh!" Marta, discovering that Hugo is under the influence of a chemical, calls Harrison with the news. Well, Harrison knows he can't handle this monster alone, so "the forces of violence are summoned." Harrison speeds to the camp on his cycle, with his jungle helmet and goggles, as a mustachioed, cigar-smoking, bullhorn-toting, sunglasses-wearing general summons the troops. Hugo crashes Claire's birthday party, only to be attacked by nudists who smash bottles on his head. Harrison joins the battle when he parachutes from a fighter plane and lands in the middle of things. A male nudist who shoots at the monster with a cap gun, and the entire cast of various old World War II and western films charge into the melee. The scene switches indiscriminately from day to night (or maybe the battle goes on for a few days) with shots of topless women among the chaos before old Hugo is finally reduced to a kaiser roll! The happy campers, rid of Hugo, continue to strip and enjoy nature.

As if the unbelievable stock battle sequence isn't enough, the film closes with a "brief summary to relive the magic moments" and we get to see everything once again.

Needless to say, **THE MONSTER OF CAMP SUNSHINE** is a true wonder, a defining send-up of the whole nudie genre, as well as a wonderful pastiche of films from every previous time period. The soundtrack consists of silent-movie-style music and silent movie credits which augment the dialogue and sound effects. The long, goofy, nudist camp sequences capture the ridiculous nature of the typical nudist camp film, as dumb music happily supports scenes of people dancing and frolicking. Occasionally this drags somewhat, but by the end it seems the whole purpose is to create the usual nudie scenario and then wreak havoc with it. The battle sequence (and the absurd general) are so over-the-top that the entire cast deserves an award for keeping a straight face. - Aaron Milenski

US, 1964. DIRECTOR- FERENC LEROGET
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO



B7Kw-8

Looks like she's afraid that she'll meet THE BEAST THAT KILLED WOMEN! Stop monkeying around and turn the page!



THE BEAST THAT KILLED WOMEN

THE BEAST THAT KILLED WOMEN claims to feature "Miami Beach's Most Lovely Nudists," though it neglects to tell you that it presents them in as bland a way as is possible. Many people will tell you that nudism has nothing to do with sex or sexuality. This film could convince you they're right.

The remarkably cheap production begins with a sick man in a hospital bed, chain-smoking as he tells his story to some dim-witted police. He is married to a nudist, and sure enough, it hadn't taken her long to convert him to nudism as well. After a night of partying, our pretty young nudist awakens and decides to catch some morning rays in her backyard. What the party has to do with anything, I don't know, but it gives us an excuse to discover that this particular nudist sleeps in a T-shirt, in a separate bed from her husband. Go figure. In any case, apparently not wanting non-nudists with binoculars to get a glimpse of his wife, our hero convinces her to go to the camp for the weekend. Apparently the couple has a lot of vacation time, since they leave on Sunday and stay at least three days.

We are introduced to the camp by a lengthy scene of nudists walking in the woods. In fact, we see a few naked butts walk down the same path two or three times. This particular camp is home to bunk beds, the usual volleyball games, and acting that's embarrassing even in this genre.

That evening, the nudists have a bonfire party (with a two-foot bonfire that consists of about eight twigs). One of the women does a lengthy dance in front of the fire, as a gorilla looks on from the woods. After the party, the gorilla pounds his chest a few times and sets off after a few women. He finds one, who screams but doesn't bother to run away, and carries her off proudly. When she momentarily escapes, he decides he doesn't really want her all that much, so he strangles her.

The next morning, a fat guy in plaid shorts finds the body and runs away, as we're treated to about a dozen shots of the woman, lying on her stomach. Word spreads, and topless women everywhere congregate to discuss the tragedy with such superb dialogue as "the ambulance is out there taking her body away. Let's go see." "Yes, let's." The ambulance scene lasts about three minutes. Later, the gorilla throws our narrator into the water as the wife screams. Hearing the screams, female bunk-mates across the camp climb into bed together. One, with a ridiculous Long Island accent, notes "I don't think I like it around here anymore." When the police finally come to question one young nudist, she can't seem to figure out what the beast is. "It's got hair all over it."

The gorilla looks like the typical man-in-a-gorilla-suit, and so much is said

about the camp losing all of its business that I kept expecting the beast to be a man in a suit with a grudge against nudists. Even our narrator says "at first I thought it was somebody in a monkey suit," but since it took "the strength of ten men" to throw the poor guy in the water he figured the beast must be real. The gorilla does turn out to be the genuine article, and we find out that an old rich lady was hiding the animal in her garage!

The film is ridiculously slow paced, terrible sound, and certainly no sex appeal. On the back of the video box, director Frank Henenlotter is quoted as saying that he always wished something would happen to break up the serenity in these nudist camps. A gorilla could do that, if used properly. The movie really could have used some scenes of the beast running around, grunting, wreaking havoc, women screaming hysterically and people running in all directions. Even the scared people just stand around and talk with their shirts off. It's a shame to see such an unimaginative use of a beast in combination with such an unimaginative use of naked people. —Aaron Milenski

US, 1965. DIRECTOR- BARRY MAHON.
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

DRACULA, THE DIRTY OLD MAN

As the 60s came to its sexy conclusion, the rating system and mainstream nudity became a threat to the profitability of the exploitation nudie. Watching **DRACULA, THE DIRTY OLD MAN** is a depressing enough experience to make the viewer glad that the genre was in its last gasps. It's a far cry from the creativity of **THE MONSTER OF CAMP SUNSHINE** or the good natured humor of **KISS ME QUICK** or **HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN**. The film is merely a halfhearted attempt to make a few bucks, done by people with no talent or even a sense of humor.

DRACULA, THE DIRTY OLD MAN is actually a re-dubbing of director William Edwards' first film, a serious attempt at a vampire movie which came out so badly that something had to be done to fix it. Last ditch attempts to save unmarketable garbage have turned up some intriguing oddities, such as Herschell Gordon Lewis' enjoyable turkey **MONSTER A GO GO** (1966). First of all, no matter what the film sounds like, it still looks like a serious film, robbing all of the jokes of their necessary context. Secondly, the feeble attempts at humor consist of what sound like improvised rambling in which characters describe what they're about to do, make lousy puns and cruel insults, and speak with outrageously inappropriate voices that should give even the most hearty viewer a headache. Worst of all, the narrative has nothing in it worth joking about. Those looking for a few laughs at the film's expense will end up with a migraine.

After credits that drip from a bloody breast, the film starts with a narrator rhapsodizing, Last Year In Marienbad-like, about beautiful blue hills. After a while we realize he's joking, barely. The scene is backed by atrocious 60s jazz guitar, which continues unceasingly throughout the entire film. Sometimes it's so loud that it is impossible to hear the dialogue.

Our hero is Mike, a Wayne Newton lookalike, who is shown dropping off his date after a night out. After he leaves, Dracula, sporting a pointy, part gray goatee, oil-slicked hair with a skunk-line down the middle, and hippie sideburns, cracks jokes while peeking in on Mike's girlfriend as she undresses. When she comes to the window, he turns into a big rubber bat on a string. The bat makes squeaks that sound like kisses. The next day, Mike is told by his boss to go see a Mr. "Alucard," who of course turns out to be Dracula. Alucard lures Mike into a cave and hypnotizes him into becoming a "Jackalman."

Mike leaves and collapses by some garbage cans, only to emerge as a wolfman—or rather a man in a brown bear mask covered by cheap hair sticking out in all directions. Apparently, Dracula has created a psychic link with him, as Jackalman (sporting the first name Irving) snags his secretary just in time for Drac to materialize and take her to the cave.

Back at the cave, Dracula ties up women on a cross, removes their clothes and licks their stomachs. Eventually, he bites them on the breast, leaving two ugly red holes. In the meantime, Irving gets in the habit of tearing the throats from men before abducting their girlfriends. In one case, he decides to rape one of the women himself, but gets too excited and rips her throat apart too.

As you may guess, this is where the film hits rock bottom. As if the rape scene wasn't offensive enough on its own, Irving makes jokes throughout the whole thing, and even the victim jokes about it: As she desperately tries to release her hand from the grip, she says "I'm trying to make my nails dry." At the time of this film's release, the "roughie" was seen by some as the future for exploitation filmmakers whose nudity-filled product was no longer enough reason to fill up theaters. **DRACULA, THE DIRTY OLD MAN** shows, in spades, why the idea wasn't a good one. The film has lots of nudity and some (for the time) shocking gore, but is also depressing and unfunny, more so because of the careless and senseless cruelty it depicts. As if this wasn't bad enough, all of the characters

speak in stilted voices that don't match their faces or expressions. At one point, Irving spies on a woman's self seduction and decides to join her. She mistakes the hairy beast for her boyfriend. Right!

Dracula spends an awful lot of time complaining that the women's breasts aren't big enough, but eventually Irving brings his girlfriend to the cave. Of course he doesn't want to part with her and a drawn out fight ends with Dracula clobbering Irving with a rock and walking into the sun, only to be killed by the light. Irving survives the blow as a human and he and his girlfriend live happily ever after.

I'll admit that I laughed once. Dracula cuts one of his captives free, and she rubs the rope burns and says "I lost my watch." It's not a particularly funny line, but it caught me the right way. If you think that's funny or if for some sick reason you think rape is hilarious, maybe you'll laugh one or two more times. But I guarantee you'll have more fun watching your laundry go round. Maybe the only people who could enjoy this film are lip-readers who can try to figure out what it was originally about.

All of this begs the question: how bad was the original that this version was preferable? Since I mentioned headaches a few times earlier, I'll finish by asking the only remaining question worth asking. What will give you a headache first? Is it the irritating music? The bad jokes? The hard to hear mumbling? The incompetent pans and zooms? The atrocious dubbing? Or maybe the idiotic voices? Or the fact that someone had the gall to call this film "the ultimate nudie horror comedy?" - Aaron Milenski

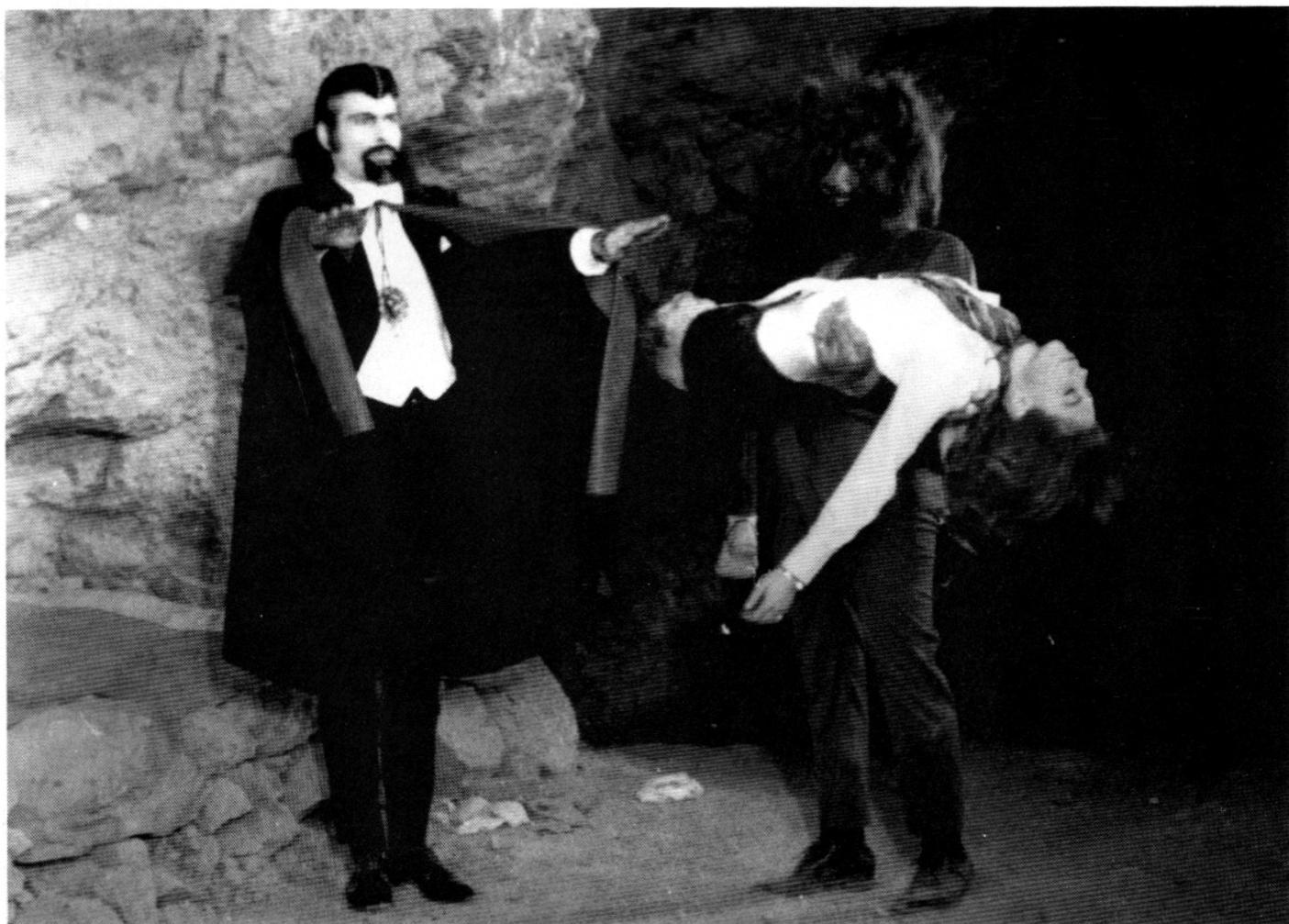
US, 1969. DIRECTOR- WILLIAM EDWARDS.
AVAILABLE FROM SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN

This recent Japanese re-working of the Frankenstein legend is an interesting rendering indeed. Written and directed by Takeshi Kawamura, **THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN** may alienate viewers who prefer fast-paced thrills and chills, but for the patient international monster enthusiast, the film has its rewards. The Japanese have always had unique methods of exploring both sex and monsters, and Kawamura's cinematic effort is no exception.

Set in the not-too-distant future, Professor Sarusawa is genuinely concerned over the proliferation of suicide cults around the world. Arguing that the suicides are the result of a transmittable brain infection, Sarusawa and his theories are quickly rejected by his colleagues. They are more aghast at Sarusawa's suggestion that a cure might be reached with the help of Professor Aleo, referred to as "Professor Frankenstein," who was unceremoniously dumped by the scientific community. Aleo's crime was to work toward the creation of an advanced human being; one that would be untainted by emotions. Sarusawa sees Aleo's research as not only a means of salvation for humanity, but first and foremost, as a cure for Mai, his psychic daughter who he fears has been stricken by the suicide disease that claimed her mother.

Sarusawa's interest in Aleo subsequently arouses the suspicions of the mad doctor who dispatches his first "failed creation" (the hunchbacked Harou), to bring Sarusawa to him. Once there, Sarusawa learns that perhaps Aleo is more insane than he suspected. A genuine misanthrope who prefers living with dead bodies than live ones, Aleo's dream is to create a superhuman and his bride so that together they can conceive a son. Aleo argues that the "sexual encounter will be legendary," but before the fun can begin, he requires something of Sarusawa: the psychic power of Mai, which is the only energy that will rejuvenate the monsters. Realizing that his goals are now unquestionably linked with



DRACULA, THE DIRTY OLD MAN: Fresh out of drama school, Drac and Wolfie decide to stage their own production of the Bard's "Taming of the Shrew" – and by the looks of it, she has been tamed to death!

Aleo's, Sarusawa concedes to the mad doctor's demands, and with Harou's help, the girl is taken from the hospital and brought to the isolated laboratory.

If you're beginning to find that the plotline is somewhat complex and convoluted, you're correct! In fact, one could argue that perhaps Kawamura has thrown a little too much into his script, but when actually viewed, these seemingly unrelated plot fragments come together quite well. Kawamura doesn't give all the pieces of the puzzle in a ready-to-assemble fashion; instead, he jumps all over the place, which can be disorienting at first. For those paying close attention, everything makes perfect sense, in a strangely off-kilter way. This film is a great example of how different Japanese horror can be when compared to Western productions. Kawamura is one in a growing number of young Japanese directors who are combining the horror or science fiction genre with overly stylish direction, pushing the final product into art-film territory without forgetting its strong links to exploitation movie origins.

Despite Aleo's years of research and careful planning, he soon learns that even the best plans can go unexpectedly awry. The much touted sex session between the male and female creatures ends up as a flaccid failure. An obvious homage to **ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN** (1973, D: Paul Morrissey) the scene is sadly amusing instead of ecstatic as Aleo screams "Kiss him!" and "Have sex! Put your penis in her vagina!" to two very uninterested creatures. Undaunted, the mad doctor feeds the monsters a steady diet of Japanese porn videos in the hope of awakening their dormant libidos. When love does eventually blossom, it does in all the wrong directions.

The male creature becomes infatuated with Kurara, a woman Aleo initially claims as his wife, but is in fact a previous attempt at creating a female creature. Aleo considers her a failed experiment, "a woman who isn't a woman," since he

forgot to activate the womb inside her. The female creature on the other hand, turns her affections toward Aleo, who despite his better judgement ends up incessantly fucking his own creation. This bizarre love quadrangle literally ends in catastrophe and bloodshed following another frustrating and unsuccessful attempt at "Sex! Sex!" between the two creatures. After taunting Aleo's failure, Kurara is struck by the furious doctor, incurring the wrath of the lovestruck male creature, who in turn arouses the ire of the female creation, who pines for her creator.

After several of the key players are eliminated from the proceedings, the male monster does in fact gain some degree of humanity thanks to Mai, but by doing so, he comes to the realization that he does not belong to this world. Becoming a sponge of knowledge, the creature turns into what Kawamura calls a "child of the universe," and despite all he has learned, the creature still knows that he will never be human, and chooses to terminate his artificial existence.

Filled with bizarre twists and occurrences (including a monster beach party!), **THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN** is not without its faults. Perhaps a tad too long at times, the narrative occasionally suffers by reiterating the same point. Some elements of the plot remain unresolved, as well. But in Kawamura's defense, the intricate design of the film suggests that this is intentional, and that the viewer is responsible for filling in the blanks. **THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN** is definitely recommended for its different approach to the Frankenstein tale, as well as its unconventional but satisfying method of achieving it. — Erik Sulev

JAPAN, 1991. DIRECTOR- TAKESHI KAWAMURA.



No, this isn't a tender scene from **FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERORS THE WORLD!** It's more like "**Frankenstein conquerors a Girl!**" from the charming little opus **THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN**.

SICK VICK, HERE, WITH THIS ISSUE'S VIDEO VICTIM:

THE CURIOUS DR. HUMPP

THIS 1967 B.W. OFFERING, FROM ARGENTINA, IS PART OF FRANK ("THE HITCHCOCK OF SCHLOCK") HENENLOTTER'S "SEXY SHOCKERS" SERIES, AND CONCERNS THE MISADVENTURES OF DR. HUMPP AND HIS QUEST TO FIND THE NERVE THAT CONTROLS THE LIBIDO. TELL THE READERS WHAT'S UP, DOC?



ONCE I FIND THE KEY TO HUMAN SEXUAL DESIRE, I'LL NOT ONLY PRESERVE MY OWN LIFE, I'LL BE ABLE TO OPEN THE DOOR TO HEIGHTEN METHODS OF SEXUAL STIMULATION... IF THIS EXPERIMENT SUCCEEDS, I'LL NOT ONLY BE ABLE TO RESTRAIN LUST, BUT ALSO TURN HUMANS INTO VIRTUAL SCREWING MACHINES!

NO! HE DOESN'T NEED ANY VOLUNTEERS! ALL OF HIS VICTIMS ARE ABDUCTED FOR HIM BY THIS COOL GHOUl WITH A 5¢ HEAD.

YIPES! I'M SCARED!

GREAT PLAN, MAN! AND LUCKY FOR US, HUMPPY'S EXPERIMENTS INVOLVE HIPPIES, LESBIANS AND GO-GO DANCERS LOCKED IN NON-STOP SOFT-CORE ORGIES.



FASTER, PUSSYCATS, THRILL, THRILL!

THE FILM'S CLIMAX SEES DR. HUMPP SUFFER THE DREADED 'DEATH BY GO-GO DANCER', WHILE HIS MENTOR, NATURALLY, A BRAIN IN A JAR, DIES IN FLAMES, SCREAMING...

THROUGH THE POWERFUL FORCES OF SEX WE DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF PRESERVING LIFE FOR EVERYONE ON EARTH. NOW, YOU HAVE DESTROYED THE DREAM OF MANKIND FOREVER! YOU WERE IMMORTAL!

I LOVE THIS STEAMING SLAB OF SLEAZE! FILL YOUR HEAD FULL OF FILTH, ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY FROM SWV. AND A PERSONAL NOTE TO FRANK, THANKS FOR THE BRAIN BLOW, BUT GET OUT OF THE VIDEO VAULT AND BACK IN THE STUDIO: **THE WORLD NEEDS MORE FRANK!**

WHAT A TEAR-JERKER! DR. HUMPP WANTED TO GIVE MANKIND ETERNAL LIFE! PERSONALLY, THE GOOD DOC BITING IT BEFORE HE TURNED US ALL INTO SCREWING MACHINES IS ENUFF TO MAKE ME CRY! HERE'S SOME MORE FINE LINES 4 U 2 SAVOR...

THEY'VE MADE YOU INTO A NYMPHO-MANIAC!

YOU SHOULDN'T CARE ABOUT THAT! IT MEANS YOU CAN GET IT WHENEVER YOU WANT IT!

SEX DOMINATES THE WORLD! AND NOW, I DOMINATE SEX!

OH, PLEASE, USE MY BODY TO KEEP YOU ALIVE!

"CRAZY OR NOT, ANYONE NEEDING DRUGS DOESN'T SEND A MONSTER TO A DRUGSTORE!"

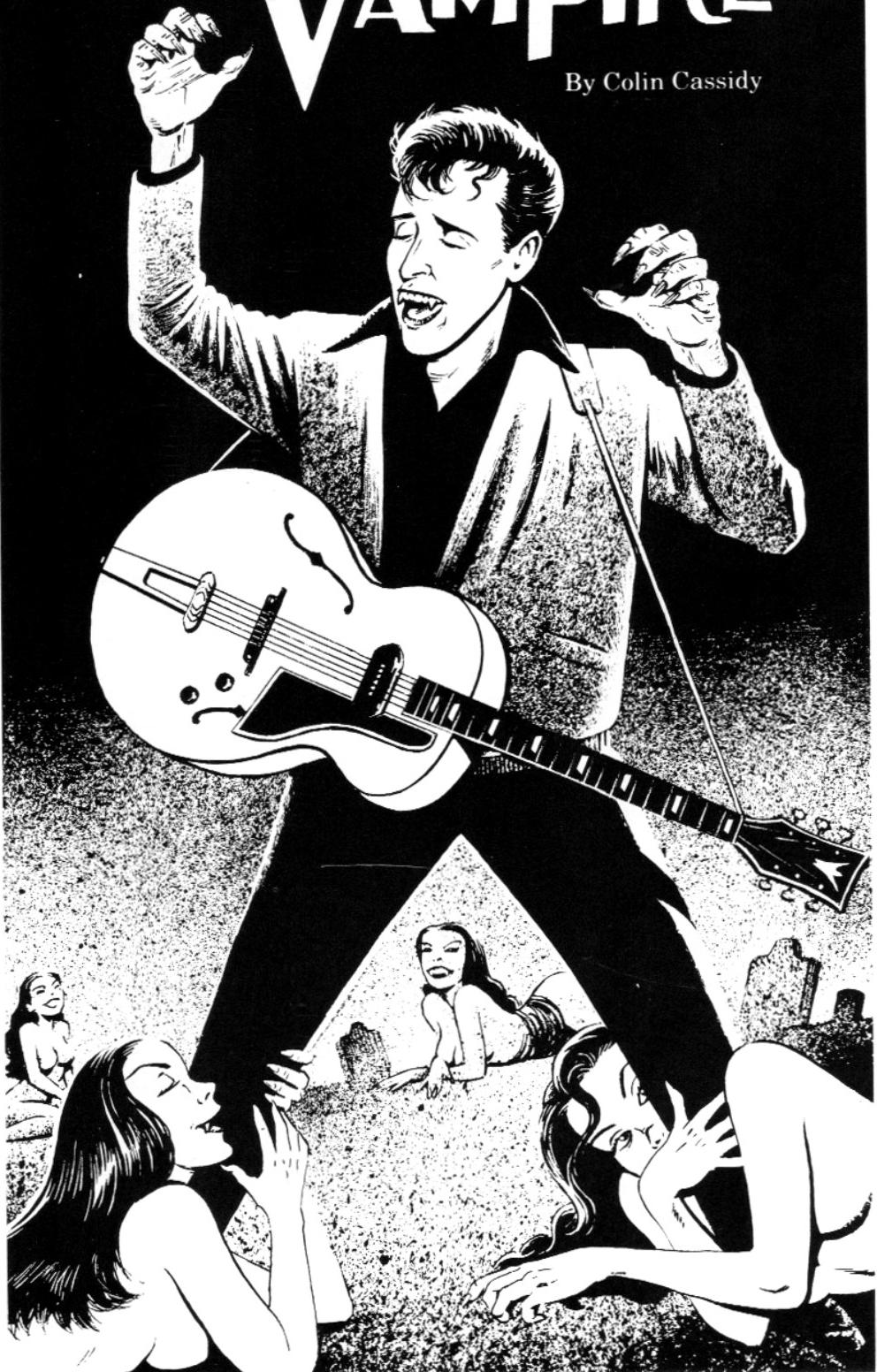


LYNDAL FERGUSON

PLUGS UNPLUGGED: JUST A QUICKIE FOR MY FAVE ROCKIN' MACHINE, DATE BAIT, A PSYCHOTRONIC TONIC OF ROCK-N-SCHLOCK. CONTACT D.B. SPOKESMAN BRIAN HORRORWITZ AT: 2101 HILDAROSE DR. # 203, SILVER SPRING, MD 20902 FOR INFO ON HOW TO ORDER THEIR RIGHTEOUS RECORDS AND T-T-TERRIFIC T-T-T-SHIRTS! ROCK RIGHT, WRITE NOW!

REVENGE OF THE JUKEBOX VAMPIRE

By Colin Cassidy



IT was the weirdest jukebox I had ever seen. It was 15 feet tall, to begin with. That in itself was not so surprising, what with the growth of Tin Pan Alley into a transcontinental freeway — unusual, but not surprising. The shape of the thing was what made it unique.

It was shaped like a man. Or, to be more precise, like a boy. A boy named Hughie Kinkaid, who had recently come out of nowhere to zoom into popularity as the greatest rock'n roll singer ever. I'd helped boost that zoom myself; I know a good thing when I see it, and I know what my readers like, so I'd given Hughie the kind of fat plugs that only money can buy for some creeps. Besides, it's a good feeling to be able to create — or squash — a star overnight with a few words in a nationally syndicated column like mine.

And now it had come to this. A jukebox shaped like Hughie, in ebony and chrome and glass and plastic designed to look like one of Hughie's famous silk and leather tuxedos, with the record player itself housed in a casing shaped like Hughie's big black guitar. I didn't doubt for a minute that they were all Hughie's records, either.

No, not surprising — just unusual, and in an unusual place. You don't ordinarily find any kind of jukebox in a plush, exclusive nightspot like the Skull Club.

I grinned to myself, took a quick sip of ginger ale — although I spend most of my working hours in nightclubs picking up gossip, I don't drink — and looked around for Sid Tarleton. He was near the entrance, smoothly ushering in an expensively-dressed couple with an air that told them they were lucky he allowed them through the door. When he turned my way, I raised one finger in the gesture that people who need good publicity to survive and prosper have learned to respect.

He scurried over to my table, his bobbing gray mouse's head looking incongruous perched on top of his slim tuxedo-clad body. I nodded without smiling. I didn't invite him to sit down, so he didn't sit; what the hell, he just owned the joint.

"Just a little information, Sid," I told him oddly, waving briefly towards the oversized jukebox. "I take it that's the big surprise you've been so cagey about?"

"That's it," Tarleton said, bobbing. "A tribute to the greatest star the entertainment world has ever known. And another example of how the Skull Club provides nothing but the best for its patrons."

"Oh, sure," I said. "What's the real deal, Sid? Hughie insist on it before he'd sign your contract?"

Tarleton straightened his back a bit, the dim purplish shadows on his thin face. "Er — Hughie's manager, David Klare, did suggest it," he admitted. "But it took a man like myself to see the significant possibilities of it. We'll have Hughie himself on for three shows an evening. No other acts, just Hughie. And inbetween shows, where we normally have orchestras and combos, the Hughie Kinkaid jukebox. America loves that boy, Mr. Ansbach, for as long as he cares to stay. And since no other entertainer can hope to compete with him, I'm presenting a program of nothing but Hughie Kinkaid — solid!"

I ignored the corny pun, and also ignored Tarleton. I'd known Hughie was opening here tonight, of course, but he'd managed to keep the jukebox gimmick a complete secret — even my leg men hadn't been able to snoop it out. Now I'd have to play it just right in tomorrow's column. Praise for Hughie, natu-

rally, and a nod of approval for the jukebox itself, but a subtle reproof for Sid Tarleton for not having let me in on it ahead of time. Let's see...

Tarleton waited long enough to avoid offending me, then faded away noiselessly into the shadows of the lush nightclub. I watched him go from the corner of my eye. I made a mental note, too, to arrange a closer contact with this manager of Hughie's, David Klare. His name was vaguely familiar, but he kept himself very much in the background while he pushed Hughie — a complete unknown only a few months before — forward. I couldn't quite place Klare, though; my mental file of artists' managers agents, and such didn't list him at all. It would take some checking.

Then the dim lights got even dimmer, the MC appeared in a spot on the stage, and the crowd held its breath in a humble expectancy that was almost frightening. I grimaced inwardly at their resemblance to sheep, reached inside my jacket, and switched off my hearing aid. I wanted to concentrate on tomorrow's column, and wasn't going to let Hughie Kinkaid's off-key moaning and off-beat guitar-pounding distract me. I know what's good for the public, but that doesn't mean I have to like it myself. I hate music. All music.

AFTER a while, though, I stopped thinking about the column to watch Hughie. He really threw himself into his work. His singing and guitar-playing may have been nothing much if you were critical about such things, but his bumps, grinds and even more complicated maneuvers were definitely something to see. His white teeth flashed in a twisted grimace, and his eyes, for the most part, remained closed as if he were in painful ecstasy.

The audience ate it up. In fact, as I looked around, I thought idly that I'd never seen any crowd so completely entranced, even by one of Hughie's performances. Hypnotized was the word that came to mind.

I almost switched on my hearing aid again to listen to what Hughie was singing, but before I got around to it I noticed that something else was going on. Off beyond the stage, in a dark corner by the curtained doorway leading to the dressing rooms, Sid Tarleton was being interviewed by a bunch of cops. Not just ordinary cops, either, but plainclothes men from the Homicide Department.

I elbowed away from my table and slid over there. Before I made the scene, the entire group had vanished through the curtain into the passageway beyond. I followed, switching my hearing aid as I did so.

A burly bull, this one in uniform, tried to stop me before he recognized me, then he turned red and grinned. I moved on in. Tarleton seemed to be protesting violently to the Homicide men, who were staring at him coldly and asking clipped questions. It was a pleasure to watch him squirm, but I was more interested in learning what was going on. I moved toward the circle of men that blocked the narrow, stuffy passageway.

Tarleton was talking, swiftly, breathily. "My God," he said, over and again. "My God. You can't release this to the newspapers! Things like this just don't happen at the Skull Club! I'll be ruined — finished!"

A lieutenant I knew as one of the most competent men in the department drew a deep breath, and put a lot of quiet force into his voice as he told Tarleton to shut up. "Nobody's going to release this to the newspapers," he went on. "News is news, sure, but there are some things you just can't let the public in on. You think we want a panic on our hands?"

I took another step forward, straightening my tie carefully. "Hello, Branton," I said. "Just what is it that you think you're going to keep from the public this time?"

Branton turned, recognized me, and looked as if he were trying to expand to fill the entire corridor. "Anspach!" he exploded. "Who let you in? And how much have you heard?"

I smiled. I've ridden patrol cars with Branton hundreds of times, and I knew I had him. "You can start at the beginning," I said. "I wouldn't want to give our fair citizens a distorted picture."

And then a thing happened that made my spine prickle a bit, it was so different from what I'd expected. For Lieutenant Branton, Homicide's toughest man, wilted before my eyes, and the look he gave me was almost pleading. It was a full minute before he spoke, and then his voice was changed completely.

"Look, Tom," he almost whispered. "We've been friends a long time, and I know I can trust you. You've got to give me your word not to let this out. It's — it's just too horrible, Tom. It would throw the entire city into screaming hysterics."

Surprised as I was, I managed to keep my pan-

The girl who had been fully fleshed, ripely curved, and radiantly complexioned was now paper white, and looked shriveled and shrunken in a way that made my own flesh creep. She sprawled, naked and pitiful, on a narrow cot...

dead. I shrugged. "Tell me what gives," I said. "Then I'll tell you whether we can bargain or not."

Branton didn't speak, but gestured to me to follow him. We went past a clutter of fire buckets, crate bottles and old stage props to a door at the end of the corridor. Branton shoved it open, then stood aside and waved me on. I started to walk into the cramped dressing room beyond, then stopped abruptly. And I don't mind admitting that for once in my life I was shocked through.

I'd seen corpses before, lots of them — but never a corpse like this.

SHE HADN'T been anybody special — just a run of the chorus line showgirl. But she had been young, pretty, and full of life. Now she was dead in a thoroughly horrible way.

Don't worry, I'm not going to go into the complete grisly details. If you've never seen a body from which every last drop of blood has been drained, believe me, you don't want to. The girl who had been fully fleshed, ripely curved, and radiantly complexioned was now paper white, and looked shriveled and shrunken in a way that made my own flesh creep. She sprawled, naked and pitiful, on a narrow cot in the glare of the unshielded light bulbs, and all I wanted was to get out of there in a hurry.

I shuddered a little as I turned away from the door. Branton followed me a short way back down the corridor, and we inspected each other silently. I couldn't help but admit that he was right.

"Okay, Branton," I said finally. "I've seen murder before, and that's the work of the most insane killer I can imagine. I won't break this now. Just let me help you track down this madman, and when I have to turn in the story I'll let you censor it first, any way you please."

Branton nodded. "A vampire," he said heavily. "An honest-to-God vampire. Only even worse than the ones you read about in books. I've never heard of one before who drank all of a victim's blood."

He stopped, pondering the horror. I was horrified too, but there was a lot I was curious about. "Has the doc seen her yet?"

I didn't mean a medical doctor, of course; I meant the department's medical examiner. Branton got the implications. "No way to tell for sure how long ago she died," he said. "Except that it must have been recently. Not more than an hour, at most. And — she was probably conscious at the beginning but ... there's no sign of a struggle at all."

It took me a few seconds to pull myself together. Then I squared my shoulders. "Clues?"

He hesitated again, then looked me square in the eye. "Not exactly," he said. "Except that she isn't the first. There's been one in Hollywood, one in Frisco and one in Vegas, just like this. All three show-girls, all in nightclubs, and all within the past two weeks. We don't know if we're facing one mad killer — or an epidemic!"

I chewed it over mentally. A picture of a huge vampire bat, rushing from city to city on leathery black wings, came to me. Certainly if there were only one killer behind all these deaths, he'd have had to fly in order to — Then a new thought came, one that was stunning in its implications. It was unbelievable, but it made such good sense that I had to believe it. There was a pattern to these deaths — a pattern Branton would have seen if he had followed the news of the entertainment world more closely ...

"Chum," I told him, "I want to help you on this. There won't be any more bloodless corpses if I can help it!"

Branton looked at me oddly, almost pityingly. But I knew that if my idea was right, I could help it!

THE COPS had already decided that somebody directly connected with the Skull Club must have committed the crime. I don't know if they could prove that no customer had been backstage, or if it was just part of the business of keeping the whole hideous thing quiet — but they definitely weren't holding any of the patrons. All employees, however, would be held for investigation. That seemed to include me, but I didn't want to leave, anyway.

For the time being, I had the freedom of the kitchen, dressing rooms, offices and such. As unobtrusively as possible, I drifted into Hughie Kinkaid's dressing room.

Hughie's act wasn't over out front, and his manager was the only person there. I recognized David Klare as soon as I saw him. The last I'd heard of him, he'd been a concert pianist and longhair composer. Obviously he'd learned that the great American public didn't go for that kind of stuff, and now he'd latched onto a better deal for himself. Well, I had to give him credit for smartening up.

He was sitting at the dressing table, studying himself in the mirror. When I said, "Hi Klare," he whirled and gave me a startled look. He was a wizened little guy with hardly any hair, and his eyes were deep black tunnels in his face. He looked as if any minute he might die of fright. This is a vampire?, I wondered. He looks like he needs a transfusion!

I made myself comfortable on the couch. "How's the racket, Klare?" I asked.

"What — what are you doing here?" He demanded in return. "What right have you — ?"

"You should talk about rights!" I shot back. "Vampire! Using a good clean kid like Hughie as a front for your slimy crimes! How long did you think you could get away with it?"

His lower lip trembled as he stared at me, and a thin trickle of saliva appeared at one corner of his mouth. It was obviously an effort for him to speak, but finally he did. "I—I don't know what you mean," he managed.

I stood up again, and moved to a point just in front of his chair. Looming over him, I held up four fingers. "Four murders, Klare," I said. "Four vampire murders. All in cities where Hughie Kinkaid was singing. And what could be a better set-up for a vampire than to —"

I stopped. Not because I wanted to, but because a big hand had come down on my shoulder in a painful grip. It clamped tighter, and bolts of agony shot through me. I tried to turn, to see who it was that had grabbed me, but all I could see was that big, waxy-looking hand, clamping ever tighter.

Then it twisted, I felt my knees buckle, and the next thing I knew I was flat on my back on the floor, and somebody was leaning over me.

Hughie Kinkaid!

HE STOOD there, big, handsome and capable-looking, his famous silk and leather tuxedo unwrinkled, his black oily hair perfectly combed. He stood there and grinned down at me with his famous white teeth — but it wasn't quite the same as the grin his fans knew and loved. It wasn't much different, but it was cold and deadly instead of warm and passionate. And seen this close, his face too had an odd waxy pallor that I hadn't noticed before.

"You're a smart man, Mr. Anspach," he said. His voice was soft, but there was a tremendous power in it. "You figured out pretty good. But you didn't quite figure all of it."

Klare seemed about to interrupt. He started up nervously, reaching toward Hughie in a gesture that was almost pleading, but Hughie silenced him with a casual wave. Klare sank back, and Hughie grinned at me again.

"You ain't never gonna live to tell this, Mr. Anspach," he said. "So it won't hurt none for you to know. Mr. Klare isn't a vampire, and I'm not a front for him. I'm the vampire — and there isn't anybody gonna stop me from taking what I want!"

His voice had risen gradually as he spoke, until it stopped on a ringing, resonant tone that was totally hypnotic. And as I lay there, afraid to move a muscle, I remembered how I had noticed the hypnotic quality Hughie seemed to have over people. It seemed fantastic that a voice should have such power — but then I remembered a man named Adolph Hitler, and how he controlled masses of people with his voice. And I remembered some of the strange rumors that circulated about him, too ...

Hardly daring to move even that much, I turned my head to look at Klare. He was a picture of unholy glee, rubbing his hands together gloating, grinning vindictively. His head nodded up and down in a mechanical rhythm, as if in confirmation of Hughie's words.

Then he saw me looking at him, and a sharp gleam kindled deep in the pits that were his eyes. "That's right," he croaked. "Hughie's right. I know because Hughie is — well, my son in a sense. My creation, certainly. I created him, Anspach, the same way that jukebox outside was created, from the same materials. I breathed life into him through electronic science. No, Anspach, Hughie isn't exactly human — but he's more than human, and no human being will ever be able to stop him."

He paused a moment, then went on, his voice even more of a croak than before. "Just one more thing, Anspach," he whispered. "I want to tell you how glad I am you're here now. Because this is all

your fault. Because I could have been a success as a pianist and composer. But you tore me down in your column. You laughed at me! I became a laughing stock because of you, and stupid men like you. It got so bad that nobody would admit he liked to listen to good music any more. So I decided to use music to gain my revenge. And through Hughie, I'm going to succeed!"

I don't know why I didn't pass out then from sheer fright, but something kept me going. I looked back at Hughie, whose grin was even broader than before. "That's right," he said cheerfully. "Mr. Klare is right. I'm more than human. I've got the most powerful voice in the world, and it's getting stronger all the time. It takes other people's blood to keep me alive, but that's just kicks, man. And tonight, I'm going to give my first public demonstration of what my voice can really do to people!

"I'm going to be the biggest man in the world, Mr. Anspach. When I say dance, everybody's going to dance. When I say kneel, everybody's going to kneel! And you know why? Because they're all creeps, that's why — creeps!"

I shuddered, and wondered if Klare could possibly retain any control over this Frankenstein creation of his. But I didn't have long to wonder. Because Hughie bent over and reached for me. His big, waxy hands lifted me, whirled me through the air, and sent me crashing to the floor. The lights danced and flickered, and then both the lights and I went out.

GRADUALLY, I regained consciousness, I ached all over, and my head felt like the morning-after, but I was awake. Slowly, I managed to pull myself to my feet and clamp down hard on my spinning thoughts. And the first thing that came through clearly was a question: why had Klare and Hughie left me alone and unguarded?

I reeled to the door of the dressing room, tried the knob, and got another surprise. It wasn't even locked! I shoved it open cautiously leaned against the jamb, and peered into the corridor.

There was nobody in sight. The place looked cold and forbidding, but I knew I had to find Branton before the singing vampire or his fiendish master returned, so I made myself move on out. I headed towards the door to the public rooms of the club, wondering where everybody had disappeared to — and then from beyond the curtained doorway I heard the sound of music.

It was a voice and a guitar and a rock 'n roll beat. It was senseless words and an insipid tune. And it was pure terror! The voice drilled straight through me, rending me apart, commanding me to obey its owner, to go where he led, to make him happy — even if it meant committing deeds of unutterable evil. It made me sweat, it made me sick to my stomach, but it also made me move as rapidly as I could to the doorway, wanting only to serve Hughie Kinkaid and make him happy. To do anything he asked, even if he asked me to tear my throat out with my own hands, to drain my blood into a vessel for him to drink!

That was the one taste I had of the indescribable power of Hughie's hypnotic voice. In that brief moment, I lost all doubts about the truth of what he and Klare had said, and all doubts about his ability to go on and rule the world as he wished. His voice convinced me, and almost finished me.

Somehow, I retained one spark of sanity. Somehow, I clung to a thread of hope. Somehow, I reached inside of my jacket and switched off my hearing aid.

And for the first time in my life, I was honestly grateful for the auto accident that had rendered me stone deaf at the age of eleven.

It took a while to recover. I actually bounced from side to side of the corridor as my mind and will power slowly swam up from the depths into which Hughie's overpowering voice had thrust them. I felt like crawling off into a corner, curling up, and dying. But I knew it was my last chance to save myself, and perhaps the entire world.

I staggered forward, swept aside the curtain and gazed on a scene of horror. In one thing I was fortunate: nobody was in any mood to pay any attention to me. Everybody in the club — employees, customers, and even the police — was packed into that one room. But they were all occupied in a manner that was almost too grisly to describe.

Even while I had listened to it, I hadn't realized the things Hughie's voice might make people do, the restraints it might make them throw off. But it made a weird, ghastly kind of sense. Hughie was *broadcasting* vampirism!

My eyes adjusted to the dim light, and I saw a crowd of packed, squirming human bodies. I stared, trying to figure out what was happening, and practically under my feet I found Sid Tarleton, his teeth fastened in the throat of a buxom, scantily clad cigarette girl. I fought my revulsion and swept the room with my eyes, to find similar scenes repeated everywhere. No one had been able to resist Hughie's soulless demands, not even the men of the Homicide squad. I still shudder when I think of it.

And then I saw Hughie himself.

He was standing before that monstrous jukebox which had been designed in his image. He was writhing, gesticulating, wrestling with his guitar as if it were alive, twisting his head back and bouncing his fantastic voice off the low, smoke-clouded ceiling. I stared in awe, and was glad I couldn't hear him.

I knew what I had to do. Moving a few steps back down the corridor, I lifted a fire-axe from the wall, holding my breath, clamping my teeth down on my tongue, and hoping against hope I'd have the chance for one solid chop at Hughie's neck before he noticed me.

It wasn't necessary.

You've heard of voices so powerful that they can shatter drinking glasses. Well, Hughie's voice — his weapon of evil — was what betrayed him in the end. For as I crept tremblingly closer, praying that he wouldn't see me, I noticed that bizarre, 15-foot jukebox begin to quiver, to shake, and then to topple. And then I stood frozen as the whole thing crashed to the floor, burying Hughie and stopping his hypnotic voice and irresistible evil in one smashing instant.

The story has never been told in public. The people who were at the Skull Club that night were as anxious to keep it quiet as anyone else; and even though it would have made page one of every paper in the country, I had no desire to write about it. I only wish I could forget it completely, but I still think about it, and wonder if I'll ever be completely the same again.

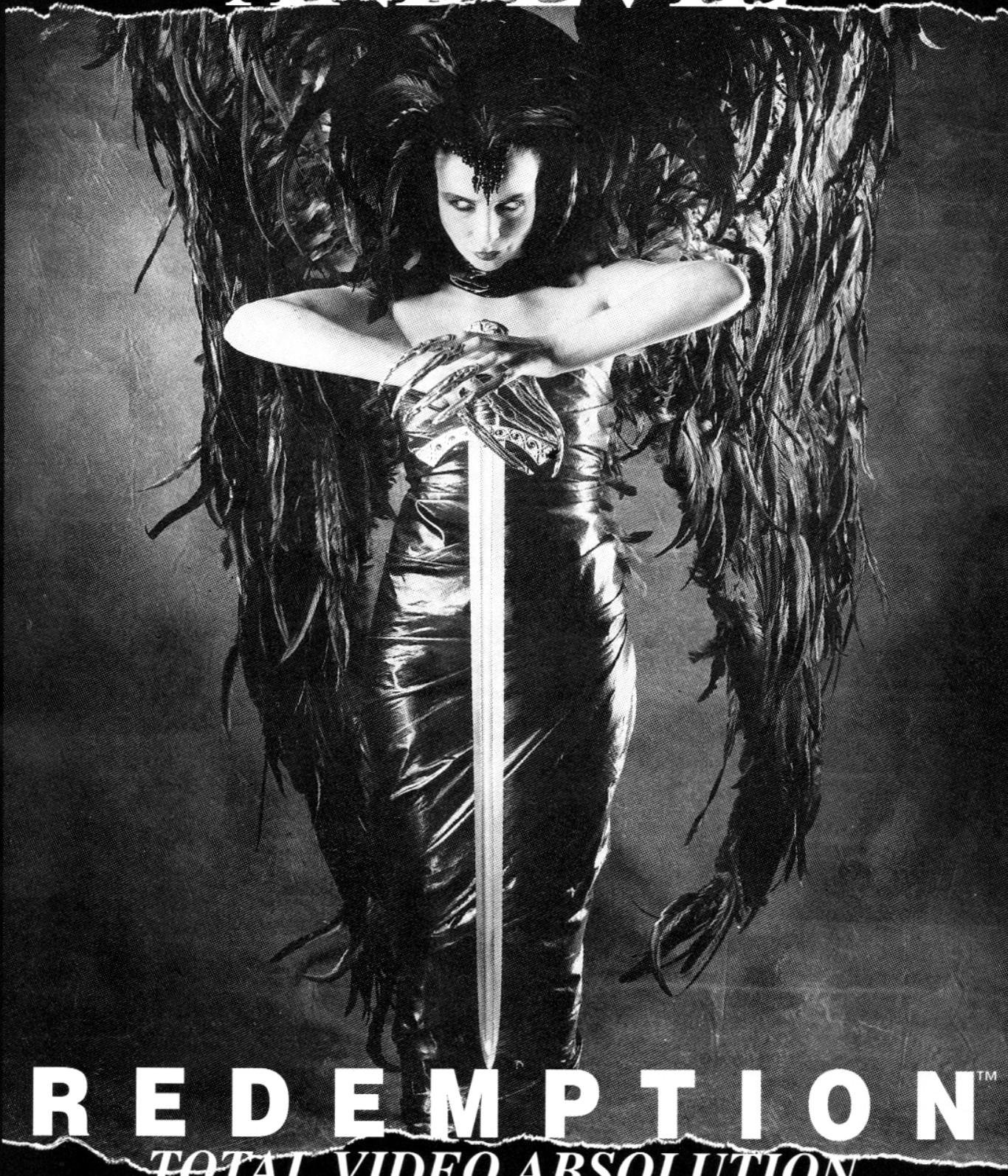
David Klare, of course is in an insane asylum now; he stares into space and gibbers madly, but he will never harm anyone again.

And Hughie Kinkaid? The cryptic news items that said he had vanished completely were correct — up to a point. For when the shattered wreckage of the huge jukebox was cleaned away, no trace of a human body was found. Just bits of ebony, chrome, glass, and plastic — and pieces of broken phonograph records.

Some had blood on them.

THE END

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Volume 18 **◀ HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN ▶** 1962 color
We've hoped to bring you this super-rare classic early nudie cutie for years, and here it is! The print quality is beautiful & so are the galaxy of glamazons that grace this zany flick! See Dracula, Frankenstein & the Wolfman do the twist!

Volume 19 **◀ THE ULTIMATE DEGENERATE ▶** 1968 b&w
Findlay fans will not be let down. The husband-wife team is back with more depravity than their competition ever dared to film!

Volume 20 **◀ INVITATION TO RUIN ▶** 1968 color
A syndicate employs drastic methods to turn busty babes into sex-slaves-for-hire. When the going gets rough, this roughie gets going!

Volume 21 **◀ MONDO BIZARRO ▶** 1967 color
What's this? A nudie-roughie in mondo's clothing? Or is it the other way around? No matter... this flick will satisfy fans of both.

Volume 22 **◀ THE ELECTRIC CHAIR ▶** 1977 color
A really fun mish-mosh of weird genres that leads up to a Faces of Death style execution, but what's a sparkler doing on top of that electric chair? From the man who gave us Dr. Gore.

Volume 23 **◀ HONEYMOON OF TERROR ▶** 1961 b&w
Is that really Foghorn Leghorn providing the off-the-wall narration in this obscure forgotten horror? Contains some nudity.

Volume 24 **◀ PSYCHO LOVER ▶** 1969 color
This long-lost, violent, psycho-sexual shocker is back! Watch what happens to a bevy of beauties when the strange voice commands to "Kill! Kill!".

Volume 25 **◀ MONDO FREUDO ▶** 1966 color
Black mass rituals, mud wrestling, prostitution & more! From exploitation kingpin Bob Cresse.

Volume 26 **◀ DEATH BY INVITATION ▶** 1971 b&w
Is it supernatural, or is the sexy Lise just a whacko chick who enjoys dismembering people? A very weird, low-budget obscurity.

Volume 27 **◀ SHE MOB ▶** 1968 b&w
Girls-in-Gangs flicks don't come cooler than this! This gang has an outrageous taste for the bizarre that will make your jaw drop. A terrific flick that is highly recommended by the maestro himself!

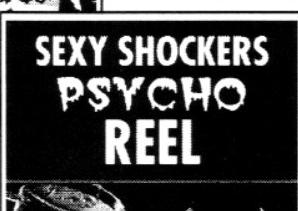
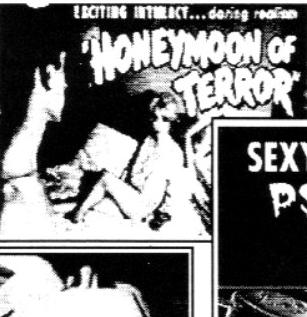
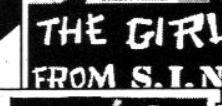
Volume 28 **◀ HEAT OF MADNESS ▶** 1966 b&w
A truly weird & grim psychologically twisted sex thriller that pushes sex & violence to its mid-'60s limits.

Volume 29 **◀ MONDO KEY HOLE ▶** 1969 b&w
Not a mondo film, but highly recommended. In Frank's own words, "Make no mistake! This is no ordinary motion picture!" Check out this wonderfully strange flick & see why!

Volume 30 **◀ THE GIRL FROM S.I.N. ▶** 1966 b&w
Look out 007, and make way for Poontang Plenty-agent 0069 as she takes on (literally) the haddies from S.I.N.! Fun secret agent sleaze from the swingin' '60s.

Volume 31 **◀ ROOM OF CHAINS ▶** 1971 color
This nudie-roughie is so obscure that our crack research staff never heard of it, so be among the first to see this tasteless tale of torture.

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Coffin Joe

TM

INVADES AMERICA!

JOSE MOJICA MARINS, the Brazilian Master of Horror, left quite an impression on his American audiences! Response to Coffin Joe has been overwhelming; he has proven beyond a doubt, to be one of the most popular cult filmmakers to come along in ages! His tales of violent psycho-sexual horror are played out so excessively and in such a weird atmosphere that anything else will seem tame in comparison!

AT MIDNIGHT I'LL TAKE YOUR SOUL

1963, black & white

The first appearance of Coffin Joe (Jose Mojica Marins.) The evil hero is a gravedigger who haunts a small town in search of the woman who will give him the perfect son to continue his legacy of horror. A classic of South American horror, this is a gruesome piece of art and a masterpiece of gore and blood. Makes *Night of the Living Dead* look like *Driving Miss Daisy*! A movie that hasn't lost its power after 30 years and a must-see for all of Mojica's fans!

THIS NIGHT I WILL POSSESS YOUR CORPSE

1968, black & white with color inserts

In this sequel to the classic *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, Ze do Caixao (Coffin Joe) continues his relentless search for the perfect woman to bear his perfect child. This film has some of the most intense horror scenes of Mojica's career. See him crushing people's heads in his horror chamber, torturing innocent women with dozens of snakes and tarantulas, and finally meeting their incarnated spirits. Mostly in black & white, except for an outstanding color sequence where Coffin Joe is dragged to Hell and forced to watch all kinds of atrocities and nastiness!

STRANGE WORLD OF COFFIN JOE

1968, black & white

Three episodes of blood, horror and despair! The first story shows a bizarre dollmaker whose creations look almost human. Almost? In the second story, Mojica shows us the pleasures and dangers of necrophilia. Then in the third episode - in order to prove his theory that love is dead - Coffin Joe appears disguised as a doctor. He captures and tortures a couple of non-believers in the most bizarre, cruel and nail-biting moments ever put on celluloid!

AWAKENINGS OF THE BEAST

1968, color

This movie is so grotesque - and so ahead of its time - that the Brazilian dictatorship banned it from video and theatres for 18 years! "The Beast" of the title is LSD. Mojica shows the suffering of a drug user who is tormented by visions of terror and pain. It's like *The Haunting* on acid! A psychedelic jigsaw of violence and incredible images!



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subtitles!



HALUCINATIONS OF A DERANGED MIND

1970, black & white, color

Mojica puts together all the scenes that were censored by the military dictatorship in Brazil in one movie! *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind* shows the curse of a young man haunted in his dreams by Coffin Joe. For the first time, Mojica's fans can see the banned scenes from over ten of his movies! It's a mix of color and black & white footage which proves the genius of this director and actor.

HELLISH FLESH

1970, color

George Medeiros (Mojica) is a scientist obsessed with his experiments to create an acid formula that can dissolve an entire human body. His scheming wife Rachel and her gigolo Oliver plan to get rid of George and spend all his money, using the acid formula for his demise. After George is hideously disfigured, he undergoes surgery (which is actual footage of an eye operation) and plots his revenge. See who gets the last laugh!

THE END OF MAN

1971, black & white

This is Mojica's "serious" movie. He plays Finis Hominis, a preacher with alleged supernatural powers. See Mojica waking up the dead, curing paraplegics and penetrating the psychedelic world of hippies! A very interesting study on the exploration of faith and mysticism.

THE BLOODY EXORCISM OF COFFIN JOE

1972, color

Mojica plays himself, the filmmaker and philosopher, who questions the possible existence of his own fictional creation - Coffin Joe! Sporting a bellbottom leisure suit, Mojica visits friends who are seemingly normal, until strange supernatural occurrences begin and members of the family become violently possessed by unseen forces. The creepy happenings lead to and culminate in a perverse, ritualistic ceremony featuring naked devil worshippers, torture, mutilation and cannibalism with none other than Coffin Joe presiding over the festivities!

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THE STRANGE HOSTEL OF NAKED PLEASURES

1975, color

Produced by Mojica and directed by his disciple Marcelo Motta, this horror movie shows Mojica as the owner of a haunted hostel where the guests can make their most abnormal dreams come true! The many bizarre scenes invoke the same ambience as his earlier banned film *Awakenings of the Beast*. There's plenty of violence!

PERVERSION

1978, color

Mojica plays a millionaire with unusual sexual habits. In one of his most "inspired" moments, he bites off a girl's nipple only to show it as a trophy to his friends. The original title *Estupro* (Rape) had to be changed due to censorship. It's a real sick one!

COFFIN JOE'S VISIONS OF TERROR

1963-86, black & white, color, COMPILATION

14 trailers from the archives of Brazil's splattermeister, including classics: *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, *The Strange World of Coffin Joe*, *Awakenings of the Beast*, and *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind*, plus a spectacular 20 minute installment from the movie *Trilogy of Terror* (1968), called *Macabre Nightmare*, about a guy who dreams about being buried alive. Guess what happens to him? A GREAT introduction to Mojica's work!

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MONSTER! INTERNATIONAL



In an effort to constantly surprise and delight our collectors, SWV is thrilled to have finally found and released Ed Wood Jr.'s long, lost, last movie **NECROMANIA!** Some believed that the film couldn't be found, but here it is in all its strangeness and glory! This time around we're also offering his classics (that continue to entertain and baffle anyone who actually takes the time to watch them); and **LOVE FEAST**, perhaps Wood's crowning achievement as an actor! Get ready for a bizarre romp through the quirky and fascinating world of Ed Wood!

JAILBAIT

1954, black & white, Directed by Ed Wood

A JOHNNY LEGEND SLEAZEMANIA GOLD SERIES EDITION!

"The story of gun-crazy girls and girl-crazy guys..." **JAILBAIT** is probably the most overlooked of Wood's early works and was filmed between *GLEN OR GLENDA* and *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE*. This picture reunites 3 of the stars of *GLEN OR GLENDA*: Lyle Talbot, Dolores Fuller and marks the first major screen appearance of Hercules-to-be, Steve Reeves. The infamous musical score is lifted intact from Ron Ormond's *MESA OF LOST WOMEN*. Here then is the restored version, transferred for the first time from the original 35mm fine grain master, followed by a brief discussion with Rudolph Grey and a Steve Reeves TV surprise from the early 50s!

VIOLENT YEARS

1956, black & white, Directed by Ed Wood

A JOHNNY LEGEND SLEAZEMANIA GOLD SERIES EDITION!

"I shot a cop...so...what!" That's the original promo headline from **THE VIOLENT YEARS**, dripping with irony even today. Amazing that after nearly 4 decades a movie like this can still manage to be shocking, entertaining and ridiculous all at the same time. Written by the master Ed Wood and riddled with striking bizarre story ingredients: girl gang terrorists robbing gas stations, raping men, ravaging high schools - all tied to an absurd "red scare" conspiracy plot. Following the film, some interesting reflections by Rudolph Grey author of "Nightmare of Ecstasy." Pristine, restored edition direct from the original 35mm negative!

BRIDE OF THE MONSTER

1956, black & white, Directed by Ed Wood

73 year old Bela Lugosi plays Dr. Vornoff in his last speaking role. In his lab deep in the swamps Dr. Vornoff uses atomic energy to create superbeings. Most of his experiments fail, but mindless giant Tor Johnson (once a normal man) survives and is called Lobo. Tony McCoy plays the hero of the film, Loretta King is the nosy reporter whom Dr. Vornoff wants to mate with Lobo. At one point the doctor gives himself the treatment and ends up in a fight with Lobo, only to fall into a pit containing a deadly creature! Another low budget wonder!

PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

1959, black and white, Directed by Ed Wood

Aliens from outer space resort to the drastic Plan 9, resurrection of the dead, in their attempt to communicate with thickheaded earthlings, and so the dead rise from their graves to become mindless remote control killer zombies. Wood's ultra classic sci-fi/UFO/vampire/living dead movie starring Vampira, Tor Johnson and 2 minutes worth of Bela Lugosi who died before the principal photography began. Hilarious on most levels replete with cardboard sets, outrageous acting, falling tombstones, fetishistic dialogue, enraged alien tirades and nonstop sermons of beyond radical philosophy, and the one and only Criswell.

NIGHT OF THE GHOULS

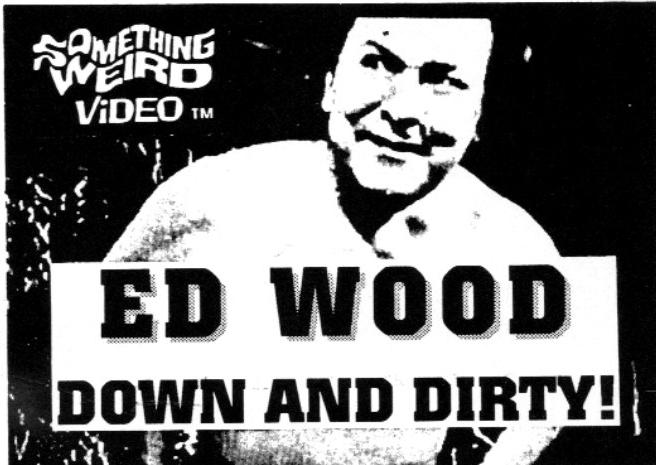
1959, black and white, Directed by Ed Wood

The astounding semi-sequel to *Plan 9* sat on the shelf for years because Wood couldn't pay the lab bill, and here it is now. A phony psychic medium Dr. Acula is surprised to discover that his "powers" of communication with the dead are real; he accidentally summons up the living dead and is buried alive by corpses. Featuring veteran *Plan 9* veterans Vampira, Tor Johnson, and Criswell who provides the introduction!

THE LOVE FEAST aka The Photographer

1969, color, 63 minutes, Directed by Joseph F. Robertson, Starring Ed Wood!

Sexual abandon reaches epidemic proportions at the house of photographer Mr. Murphy when some groovy chicks drop by for a private audition. The swinging shutterbug invites the anxious babes in one by one, and before long has more than he can handle! The girls take it upon themselves to indulge Wood's personal fetishes in an unbelievable finale!



A FRANK HENENLOTTER'S SEXY SHOCKERS
SPECIAL EDITION!
ED WOOD'S LONG LOST LAST MOVIE!

NECROMANIA

NECROMANIA

1971, color, 43 minutes, Written and Directed by Ed Wood
with Ric Lutze, Rene Bond, Maria Arnold

Those who know Ed Wood from such eccentric epics as *Plan 9* from Outer Space and *Glen or Glenda* are in for a shock 'cause **NECROMANIA** isn't quite like any other Ed Wood film. Perhaps the rarest and most sought after of Wood's "lost" features, **NECROMANIA** is a crazy mix of sex and spookiness as a dimwitted couple, in need of sexual therapy, enter Madam Heles' presumably haunted house and find cheap sets, wacky dialogue, and a naked gal in Criswell's coffin!

Hosted by yours truly, who also discusses the film with Ed Wood biographer Rudolph Grey. Plus, as an added bonus, a special abbreviated version of **LOVE FEAST** featuring one of Wood's rare starring roles, in which Ed plays a horny photographer trapped in a perpetual orgy who is also made to wear a dog collar and nightie while licking the boots of his female captor.

Nobody made 'em like Ed Wood made 'em.

Frank Henenlotter

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EVERYONE'S SCREAMING MAN... OR ASTRO- MAN?



Cooler than the Cold War, faster than the Space Race, bursting through the boundaries of the New Frontier like a hurtling meteor of destruction gone mad, it's the missing link between consciousness and the cosmos — **Man or Astro-Man?!** Witnessing a typical live performance by this unholy gene-altering union of man and machine is like zooming off on a howling, screaming, drunken chicken run through the corridors of space and time, crossed with ramming your nitro-fueled dragster through a B-movie drive-in screen while you're picking up transmissions from Telstar on your fillings! Irradiated by the banks of stacked TV sets beaming multiple black & white exploitation films of monsters and musclecars and bikinied babes and crumbling futuristic civilizations, the audience uncontrollably thrashes in a St. Vitus dance of science-fiction surf hysteria while the band lashes them with senses-scrambling soundwaves, urging them to go higher, higher, higher — until the crowd lets go like a plutonium lava-lite reaching critical mass! This band's transglobal seismic sonic reverb buffets Richter scales in Mongolia! The punch these boys pack carries a real *asteroid belt*!

Bringing you yesterday's technology tomorrow is an enigmatic foursome: *Star Crunch*. *Dr. Deleto and his Invisible Vaportron*. *Coco, the Electronic Monkey Wizard*. *Birdstuff*. Unassuming names for these unassuming individuals who, onstage, can defy gravity, make strong men weep, and Osterize chromosomes. But Man or Astro-Man?'s preternatural understanding of a cultural zeitgeist that blossomed twenty years before they walked the planet reveals that this is no mere flirtation with a trendy genre — these four mutant clones are steeped in it like a toxically strong tea. They even sought out famed 50s sf cover illustrator Richard Powers to create a piece for the cover of their recent album, *Is It . . . Man or Astro-Man?* They are so imbued with the pure distilled essence of the era that it's soaked into their RNA; sleaze culture veritably oozes from their every pore. Truly these must be the mutant bastard stepchildren of the Queen of Outer Space! Or were the parents who spawned them the flickering, fragmented, alluring blue-grey images beamed through the ether from some far-off unheard-of UHF station? Or, perhaps, could they be the product of several generations of gene-splicing and intensive gamma-video exposure? The cathode-ray tans each of them sports could be a tip-off. Birdstuff once stopped beating the skins long enough to observe, "It's kind of masochistic, but right up there at the TV, you

can feel that cancer just oozing into you —" he paused wistfully, then shuddered and twitched. "That's the only way to go. A little depravity never hurt anyone, that's the way we feel." Did they have depraved childhoods? "It helps to get a good start," he replied cryptically with a thin smile. Whatever their mystery-shrouded origins, this one truth remains: They are here among us and must be regarded with awe, fear, lust, and wonder.

Submitted here for your approval is the latest offering from these incandescent-eyed Children of the Damned. Now you, the readers of *Monster! International*, can wail and groove and teeter on the brink of hysterical atomic musical apocalypse with this deranged bar-band from beyond Arcturus! Sample these cosmically enriched delights:

Gargantua's Last Stand — a solid wall of sound that smashes into you like a bug on a windshield! At last, music in Tohoscope! Thrash with the twangospheric sonic waves that can send the biggest of the big boys screeching back to Monster Island! Ghidrah's in them guitars, man!

The Shadow Knows — a Link Wray song reminiscent of his classic piece *Rumble* with its jadedly slack strumming and bizarre, evil overtones. River Phoenix would've dug nodding out to this one! What isn't there to love about a song that ends out with a snip of dialog from the nudist epic **MONSTER AT CAMP SUNSHINE**?

Creature in the Surfer's Lagoon — This number was originally done by Joe South, who later sang "The Games People Play." That in itself is horrifying enough! A blood orgy of wailing thrashing mayhem!

Espanto del Futuro — In the future, when it's all one big industrialized paved world, we'll hum this tune and plead in agony to the laughing stars. But for now we can rock on these twanging waves and fool ourselves that we'll be getting off this planet! Hah!

Give your pineal gland a treat and wallow in the sublime sounds of these 21st Century marvels. I know who I want to be playing in 1998 when the Xists come to harvest human slaves — someone with hellish eye-beams that slice through tungsten steel like room-temperature Velveeta, who speaks the universal language accented with wet, squishy reverb! Could it be that we need **Man . . . or Astro-Man?**

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MAN... or ASTROman?

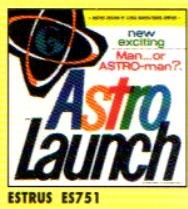


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